THE CSO'S NEW WUNDERKIND CONDUCTOR | JOHNSON VS. TRUMP

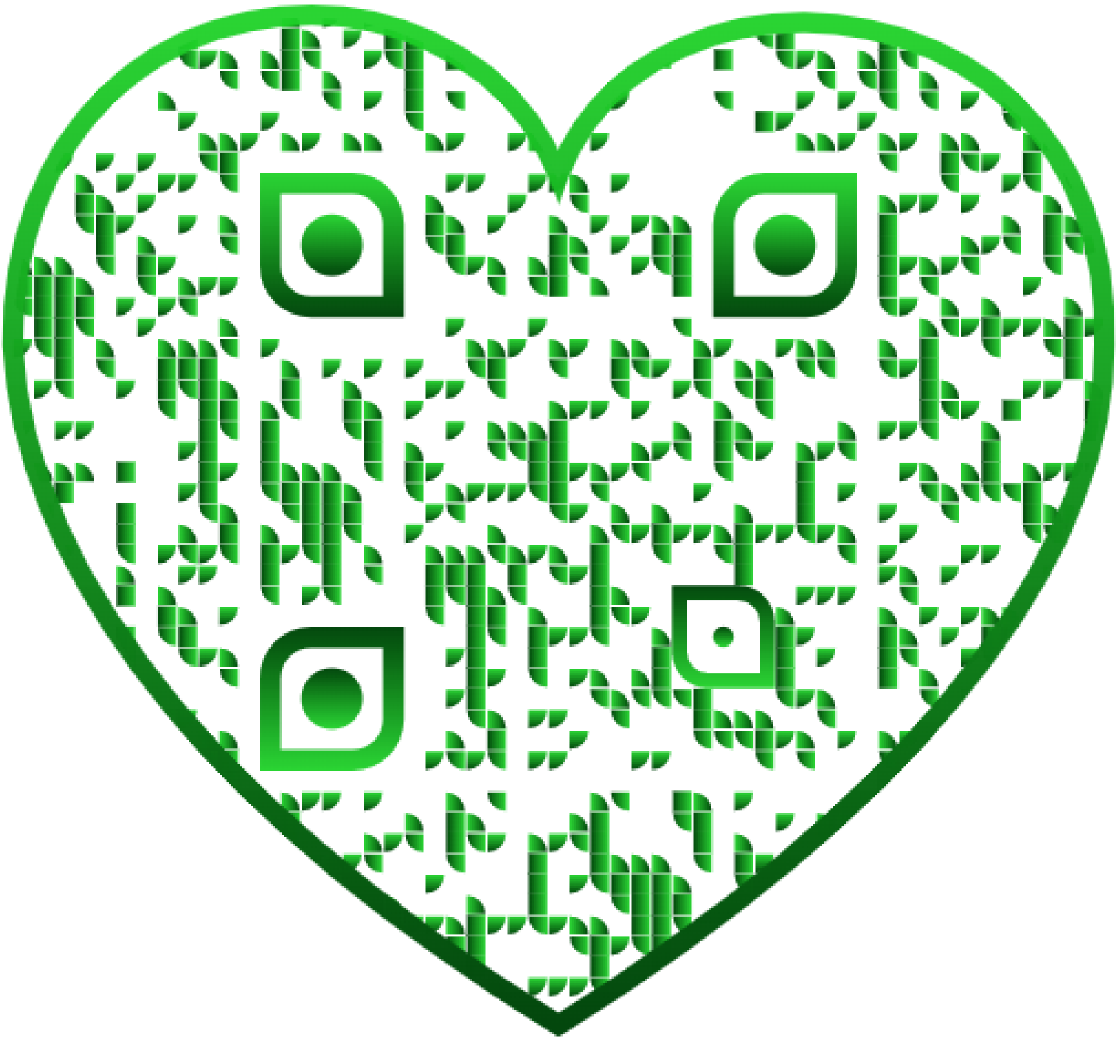
CHICAGO®

AUGUST 2025

BEST OF THE BURBS

WHERE TO EAT (AND DRINK) OUTSIDE THE CITY

Featuring the
international flavors
of Elmhurst's
Sweet Circle



GULF TO BAY & MORE

ST.PETE
CLEARWATER, FL
VisitSPC.com

AMERICA'S FAVORITE BEACHES & FAMILY TRAVEL

Family fun is easy to find in St. Pete-Clearwater. Enjoy mother nature's very own sandbox with over 35 miles of sugar white-sand beaches or swim in the warm, emerald Gulf waters. With everything from nature trails, (friendly) pirate ships and three-story waterslides, St. Pete-Clearwater is perfect for families. Make memories with a beautiful beach backdrop and warm, local hospitality that welcomes you.

Whether you're traveling with your own family or extended family or even groups of families, you'll find a warm welcome and exceptional accommodations. Nancy Cimney is the Director of Sales and Marketing at Opal Collection, a group of luxury hotels and resorts. She's also a long-time resident of the area and understands why St. Pete-Clearwater has families coming back year after year and even generation after generation. She also happens to work near her favorite local beach, "We love families on Clearwater Beach. The Opal properties are destinations in themselves, but it's a great beach town. It's safe. You've got the Clearwater Marine Aquarium, which I love, and Pier 60 which has its own sunset festival every day. There's always something going on."

“WE LOVE FAMILIES ON CLEARWATER BEACH.”

NANCY CIMNEY

Director of Sales and Marketing at Opal Collection

Offering accommodations for every type of family, Opal Collection has several properties, giving families lots of choice for their stay and a host of amenities. “Opal Sands and Opal Sol have an abundance of room types to accommodate families of all sizes, and many of them are suites that can be connected. While the Sandpearl is located directly on the beach, so that pool and beach experience is very easy, it also has spacious one- and two-bedroom suites with full kitchens.” No matter which property you choose, you and your family have access to several amenities at each resort. The list includes four pools, ten dining options, two spas and a whole lot of fun.

While the beach may bring you in, there’s so much more for families to do and see. Come aboard a “real” pirate ship on Captain Memo’s Pirate Cruise. Enjoy a round of mini golf or a friendly family pickleball tournament. Spend the day at one of the local waterparks, or plan an outdoor adventure at one of the many state parks that offer everything from walking trails, kayaking and even the opportunity to spot local wildlife. Visit the Clearwater Marine Aquarium to see some of the local underwater residents and learn about their natural habitats.

Discover more in St. Pete-Clearwater with the Gulf to Bay magazine. Scan the code to read it online or request a free copy by mail.

LOCAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Top 5 Must Do Experiences for Nancy Cimney, Opal Collection Hotel & Resorts

1. Sunset Celebration

“I’m partial, but the sunset celebration at Sandpearl resort is a staple everybody should experience, no matter where you’re staying. Every night, at the exact moment that the sun hits the waterline, Ridley, the mascot for the Sandpearl kids club, chooses a lucky little to help him ring the sunset bell.”

2. Spa Day

“Any of the Opal spas are going to be on my top list of things to do.”

3. Clearwater Marine Aquarium

“Clearwater Marine Aquariam is not your typical aquarium. It’s a rescue, rehabilitation and release facility, so they really protect the environment. Manatees, dolphins and turtles that have been injured are rehabbed and released.”

4. Take Me Out to the Ballgame

“I would also put a Philadelphia Phillies spring training game on the list. And if you don’t come during spring training, the Threshers play there year-round.”

5. The Dalí Museum

“The Dalí Museum celebrates the life and art of Salvador Dali. The first time I went to the museum, I was blown away by the amazing collection and the life size interactive art.”

ST.PETE
CLEARWATER,FL
VisitSPC.com

Traverse City
FOOD & WINE

presented by 4Front credit union

HEAD HERE FOR
A LIST OF EVENTS!

AUGUST 20-24, 2025

EVENT DETAILS & TICKETS:
TRAVERSECITYFOODANDWINE.COM

FEATURING:

TYLER FLORENCE

MEI LIN

SARAH WELCH

ABRA BERENS

JI HYE KIM

and many more...

Volume 73 ■ Number 7

FEATURES

PHOTOGRAPH: TODD ROSENBERG

44

The Age of Klaus Mäkelä

Not even 30, the conductor is already the buzziest name in classical music. Now he's set to usher in a new era at the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.
By Nicholas Cannariato

54

THE CASE FOR REVIEWING WHILE HIGH

Chicago's dining critic explains why cannabis makes him better at his job.
By John Kessler

60

HOW TO EAT (AND DRINK) YOUR WAY THROUGH THE SUBURBS

From doughnuts with global flair to refreshing lychee martinis, there's no shortage of bold flavors beyond the city limits.

DEPARTMENTS

CHIAUG

page 18

page 85

page 29

15
THE 312
Johnson vs. Trump … Pope Leo's Chicago … A master of impressions … An Adams family manor … A crime podcast hosted by Elgin detectives … A party planner's wellness routine.

25
GO
Clinical counselor by day, Jessica Risker swaps her therapy couch for a guitar and flute on her first album in seven years … 10 things to do this month.

29
TABLE
A Filipino bang-bang-bang … The best soft serve … A must-try plantain dish … Cafe Yaya is still finding itself … An Indonesian joint … The hottest spots in town … Make a tavern-style pizza.

41
CHICAGO STORIES
In his new memoir, an acclaimed chef recounts working for a culinary legend — and how their relationship soured.
By Curtis Duffy with Jeremy Wagner

83
FOUND
Locally made '80s-inspired handbags … Camp Wandawega opens up shop in West Town … Stylish goods with a romantic touch.

87
SQUARE FEET
Home sales are down, but the news hasn't been all bad for the real estate agents in our latest rankings.

IN EVERY ISSUE

- **From the Editor**, 8
- **Inside Peek**, 8
- **Talk to Us**, 10
- **City of Big Questions**, 12
- **Backroom:** J. Ivy, 112

ON THE COVER PHOTOGRAPH BY CLINT BLOWERS

PHOTOGRAPHY: (PORTRAIT) EVAN JENKINS; (PRODUCTS) COURTESY OF VENDORS; (FOOD) JEFF MARINI

Curious Minds
Endangered Plants
Food Security
Opportunity
Nutrition
Friendships
Well-Being
Knowledge
Healthier Communities

SO MUCH GROWS HERE

SCIENCE ✷ **URBAN AGRICULTURE** ✷ **EDUCATION**
Negaunee Institute · Windy City Harvest · Regenstein School

chicago botanic garden
PLANTS.PEOPLE.PLANET.

One of the treasures of the Forest Preserves of Cook County

WHEN MEMORY FADES, HOPE DOESN'T

Cognitive decline can steal the past, but it doesn't have to steal the future. Pioneered to curb the effects of cognitive decline, Circle of Friends® is a unique, evidence-based program for building brain fitness. It was developed by Belmont Village in collaboration with the nation's top universities and healthcare institutions — and it works. Residents enjoy a rich, therapeutic program of physical and mental activities designed to maintain brain function and build self-esteem.

BelmontVillage.com/Chicago

BELMONT Village
SENIOR LIVING

©2025 Belmont Village, L.P. | AL 5104242, SC 0052068, 0052084, 6016935, 0052076

CHICAGO
A TRIBUNE PUBLICATION

EDITORIAL

EDITOR IN CHIEF
Terrance Noland

CREATIVE DIRECTOR
David Syrek

DEPUTY EDITOR
Stanley Kay
DINING EDITOR
Amy Cavanaugh

ART DIRECTOR
Elizabeth Carlisle
PHOTO DIRECTOR
Jaclyn Rivas

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
Kelly Aiglon (Found)
Web Behrens (Go)
Edward McClelland (The 312)
CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Mark Bazer, Ximena N. Beltran Quan Kiu, Lolly Bowean, Kim Brooks, Mark Caro, Thomas Connors, Kelley Engelbrecht, Nina Kokotas Hahn, Cate Huguelet, John Kessler (dining critic), **Rebecca Makkai, Jake Malooley, Heidi Mitchell, Grace Perry, Tal Rosenberg, Kathleen Rooney, Peter Sagal, Heidi Stevens, Judy Sutton Taylor, Mike Thomas**
CONTRIBUTING COPY EDITORS
Robert Loerzel, Amy Schroeder
RESEARCH ASSISTANTS
Jenny Hellwig, Madison Roth

CONTRIBUTING ART DIRECTOR
Britney Trezzo
CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS
Jeff Marini, Lisa Predko
CONTRIBUTING ILLUSTRATORS
QuickHoney, John Kenzie
CONTRIBUTING DIGITAL IMAGING SPECIALIST
Andrew Davis

CONTRIBUTING DIGITAL EDITOR
Sarah Steimer
DIGITAL PRODUCERS
Mike Lietz, Lynette Smith

PRODUCTION SPECIALIST
Alyssa Boyce

Member, City and Regional Magazine Association

Chicago (Vol. 74, No. 7, AUGUST 2025; ISSN 0362-4595) is published monthly by *Chicago* magazine, 1000 Albion Ave., Schaumburg, IL 60193-4549, a wholly owned subsidiary of Tribune Publishing Company. Periodicals postage paid at Chicago, IL, and additional mailing offices. *Subscriptions:* $19.90/one year, $28/two years, $36/three years. Single copy $6.99. *Chicago* assumes no responsibility for the return of unsolicited materials. For information regarding subscription purchases, renewals, or changes of address, call 800-999-0879 or visit chicagomag.com/subscriptions. © 2025 by *Chicago* magazine. All rights reserved under International and Pan American Copyright Conventions. Reproduction in whole or in part without prior written permission is strictly prohibited. For article reprints and permissions, call Wright's Reprints, 877-652-5295. *Chicago* is available in digital form through Zinio. The names *Chicago* and *Chicago Guide* are trademarks of *Chicago* magazine. Postmaster: Send address changes to *Chicago* magazine, PO Box 37016, Boone, IA 50037-0016. Printed in USA.

ADVERTISING

ADVERTISING DIRECTOR
Megan Holbrook

SENIOR ACCOUNT MANAGERS
Patti Augustyn
Valeria Coric
Jacqueline Simon

REGIONAL SALES REPRESENTATIVES

Hawaii
Account Manager
JUSTIN NAKAAHIKI
808-739-2200
justinnakaahiki@dmhawaii.com

Michigan
Regional Manager
JAN HESS-WAHL
248-505-0796
jhesswahl@comcast.net

Northeast U.S. and Mid-Atlantic
National Account Director
CYNTHIA DONAHER
917-679-5506
cynthia@donahermedia.com

Southeast U.S.
Account Director
WHITNEY FORD DICK
954-493-7311
whitney.ford@gmail.com

Western U.S.
SHANA WONG SOLARES
808-386-0872
shanawong@me.com

AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT

CIRCULATION SALES MANAGER
RaMeka Johnson
SENIOR CONSUMER MARKETING MANAGER
Tanya Terry-Cobbin
AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST
Margaret Andras

CORPORATE

GENERAL MANAGER
Par Ridder

FINANCE

SENIOR DIRECTOR
Michele De Venuto
MANAGER
Gina Mata
SENIOR ANALYST
Laurie Anderson

***CHICAGO* MAGAZINE OFFICES**
1000 Albion Ave.
Schaumburg, IL 60193

PLAY. STAY. DINE. RELAX.

Ready for something totally new? Go from casino playing and upscale gourmeting to hotel staying and spa getawaying, all in a single visit to the biggest thing to hit Chicago Southland.

Book your escape now at **WindCreek.com/visit**.
Or call (866) WIND-361.

WIND CREEK®
CASINO & HOTEL

Must be 21 years or older. If you or someone you know has a gambling problem, crisis counseling and referral services can be accessed by calling 1-800-GAMBLER.

FROM THE EDITOR

The Burb Boom

THERE WAS A TIME WHEN CHICAGOANS SCOFFED AT DINING outside the city limits. But that is changing, as you will see in this month's cover story, "How to Eat (and Drink) Your Way Through the Suburbs" (page 60). "A lot of chefs who made their name in the city are looking to the suburbs as the next place they should open their restaurant," says *Chicago* dining editor Amy Cavanaugh. "It's not super surprising anymore when I hear about Deere Park opening up in Highwood with Todd Stein, or Chris Curren adding a restaurant in Aurora later this year. It really speaks to an increased appetite in the suburbs for restaurants like this."

For a while now, the burbs have been a destination for some of the best ethnic cuisine in the metro area, particularly Indian, Korean (Glenview, we see you), Japanese (page 72), and Middle Eastern (page 68). But the rise of fine dining there may have gotten a push from the pandemic. "Lots of people left the city for the suburbs, which is going to give you a bigger dining-out audience," says Cavanaugh. "Also, some of those were chefs."

As for Cavanaugh's suburban favorites, she cites an old-school spot, the supper-club-like Del Rio in Highwood, as well as a relative newcomer, New Village Gastro Pub, a Korean restaurant in Northbrook.

Terrance Noland
Editor in Chief

INSIDE PEEK

Cannariato at a concert in Vienna

Variations on a Theme

NICHOLAS CANNARIATO SPENT A LOT OF time at Symphony Center for his profile of new Chicago Symphony Orchestra music director Klaus Mäkelä (page 44). Fittingly, that's where his passion for classical music started two decades ago, at a performance of Ravel's *Boléro*. It sparked, he says, "kind of a religious conversion." He became a regular CSO concertgoer and even took violin lessons for a few years. (After realizing he had "no talent at all," he gave it up: "My teachers were professional musicians, and you could see the wincing on their faces.") Soon he found another way to embrace the genre: writing about it for publications such as *The Atlantic*, *The Believer*, and, now, *Chicago*. –JENNY HELLWIG

LET HIM BE CLEAR

Ever wonder what Barack Obama would sound like ordering a hot dog? Now you can find out—well, sort of. We asked comedian **Matt Friend**, the subject of this month's Vox (page 18), to do his best impression of the former president and other celebs during our photo shoot with him at Fatso's Last Stand. Watch the video at *chicagomag.com/mattfriend*. –J.H.

PHOTOGRAPHY: (NOLAND) MICHAEL ZAJAKOWSKI; (CANNARIATO) COURTESY OF NICHOLAS CANNARIATO; (FRIEND) ZACHERY GREEN

SAINT LAURENT / GUCCI / BURBERRY

SAINT LAURENT / GUCCI / BURBERRY

SAINT LAURENT / GUCCI / BURBERRY

8982
ICONIC COLLECTION
8981
6

ELEGANCE. REDEFINED.

WORLD-CLASS OUTDOOR SHOPPING, DINING, AND ENTERTAINMENT
140+ STORES | 30+ RESTAURANTS

OAKBROOK CENTER
OAKBROOKCENTER.COM

SKECHERS
THE UNO
skechers.com

TALK TO US

THE GREAT OUTDOORS! 12 EXHILARATING GETAWAYS JUST A DRIVE AWAY
CHICAGO
THE L IN CRISIS
WHY OUR TRAIN IS IN TROUBLE AND WHY IT'S WORTH SAVING
DOORS
With ridership lagging and a fiscal reckoning looming, the L is in trouble.
CLOSING
Here's why our train is worth saving.

My favorite piece of magazine writing this year.

@paulxt via X

L Troubles

We need to hold leaders accountable to ensure that the CTA is safe and reliable – and also not take having one of America's only legit public transit systems for granted [“Doors Closing,” May].

@thorntonroams *via Instagram*

This is an incredible tour de force on all the many problems of the L. Fair, thoughtful, thorough, and unsparing in its critique of governance, safety, efficiency, and so on, across Chicagoland, Springfield, and (to some extent) DC.
@gregshill.com *via Bluesky*

This story made me so mad. The entire Dorval Carter era was an enormous mistake, and he gets rewarded with a huge salary from a hospital.
@nilo.bsky.social *via Bluesky*

It's a disgrace that the L lines aren't safe. Cities should 1000 percent prioritize safety with mass transit. No excuses.
@marisaschwartz_ *via Instagram*

Great work on this, Tal Rosenberg. Essential Chicago reading.
@readjack *via X*

Everyone should read this piece. Chicago's transit system reflects its segregation — we can't fix one without addressing the other.
@hkappklote *via X*

PAST MEETS PRESENT IN CIRCA 1990 PHOTOS
Great to see these [“Shades of Boredom,” May]. The more things change the more they stay the same.
@dontetatum *via Instagram*

MAKING CITIES SAFER
IMHO, here's one of the most grounded and compelling clear articles on gun violence of recent vintage [“A History of Violence,” May].
@markogeovani *via X*

COOL COCKTAILS
Gus' Sip & Dip is one of my favorite spots right now [“Classics Elevated,” May]!
Liz Goodwin *via LinkedIn*

WHERE TO FIND US

Email us at **letters@chicagomag.com**. *Chicago* may edit letters for conciseness, clarity, and accuracy.

■ Our email newsletters alert you to the latest in dining, culture, shopping, real estate, current events, and more. Sign up at **chicagomag.com/newsletters**.

■ Check out the latest episodes of Dish, our dining podcast, at **chicagomag.com/dishpodcast**

PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID SYREK

SKECHERS®
COZY FIT™
Enjoy the Cozy Life
skechers.com
MACHINE WASHABLE
SKECHERS SLIP-INS
CONTOUR FOAM

Cheers…
to Unique Eats, Great Drinks & Good Company!
One Village. Every Flavor.
dineinwheeling.com
VILLAGE OF WHEELING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

CELEBRATING 43 Years OF TIMELESS ART & CRAFT
週年慶
SAVE UP TO 30% OFF ALL SHOWROOM PURCHASES
CHINA FURNITURE & ARTS
CHINAFURNITUREONLINE.COM
35 South Cass Avenue
Westmont, IL 60559
Tel: 630-241-2888
Mon-Fri:10-6, Sat: 10-5
Sun: by appointment only

Q:

Why does Chicago have elevated trains?

CITY OF BIG QUESTIONS

ANSWERED BY EDWARD McCLELLAND

Two reasons: money and geology. In the early 1890s, as Chicago prepared for the World's Columbian Exposition, there was a rush by private companies to build a public transportation system here. The first elevated train line was opened in 1892, and three more private lines would soon follow. In 1897, transportation magnate Charles T. Yerkes built the Union Loop, as it was then called, to connect the entire system downtown. Elevated lines were cheaper to construct than subways, so they appealed to the profit-minded transportation firms, which were supplanted by the Chicago Transit Authority in 1945.

Underground rail was also more difficult to build here, says local historian Tim Samuelson: "Subway construction was problematic in Chicago given the soft clay-like nature of the substrate, and the nature of fragile 'floating' building foundations in the downtown area." New York City, whose subway opened in 1904, was able to dig through rock, which supported buildings better than Chicago's clay.

Chicago eventually figured out how to build a subway, so why did the city continue to add elevated rail? Constructing subways to the outlying neighborhoods, says Samuelson, "wasn't worth the cost, effort, and physical disruptions."

Send your questions about the Chicago area to emcclelland@chicagomag.com.

ILLUSTRATION: GREG CLARKE

CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Energy. Vision. Artistry.

Zell Music Director Designate Klaus Mäkelä brings all three qualities to the 2025/26 Season.

OCT 16-18
Mäkelä Conducts
Symphonie Fantastique

DEC 18-20
Klaus Mäkelä
& Yunchan Lim

FEB 19-21
Mäkelä Conducts
Ein Heldenleben

MAR 5-6
Mäkelä Conducts
The Rite of Spring

CHOOSE ANY THREE OR MORE CONCERTS AND SAVE 15%

CSO.ORG | 312-294-3000
SYMPHONY CENTER | 220 S. MICHIGAN AVE.

EXPLORE THE SEASON

Artists, prices and programs subject to change.

PISTACHIOS

CONTEMPORARY ART JEWELRY

716 N WABASH AVE. CHICAGO, IL 60611

(312) 929 - 6575 | PISTACHIOSONLINE.COM

WITH OVER 150 ARTISTS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD, PISTACHIOS HAS BEEN CURATING THE BEST IN CONTEMPORARY ART JEWELRY AND OBJECTS FOR THE PAST 30 YEARS.

THE 312

Parker

Talking Points

This month's conversation starters

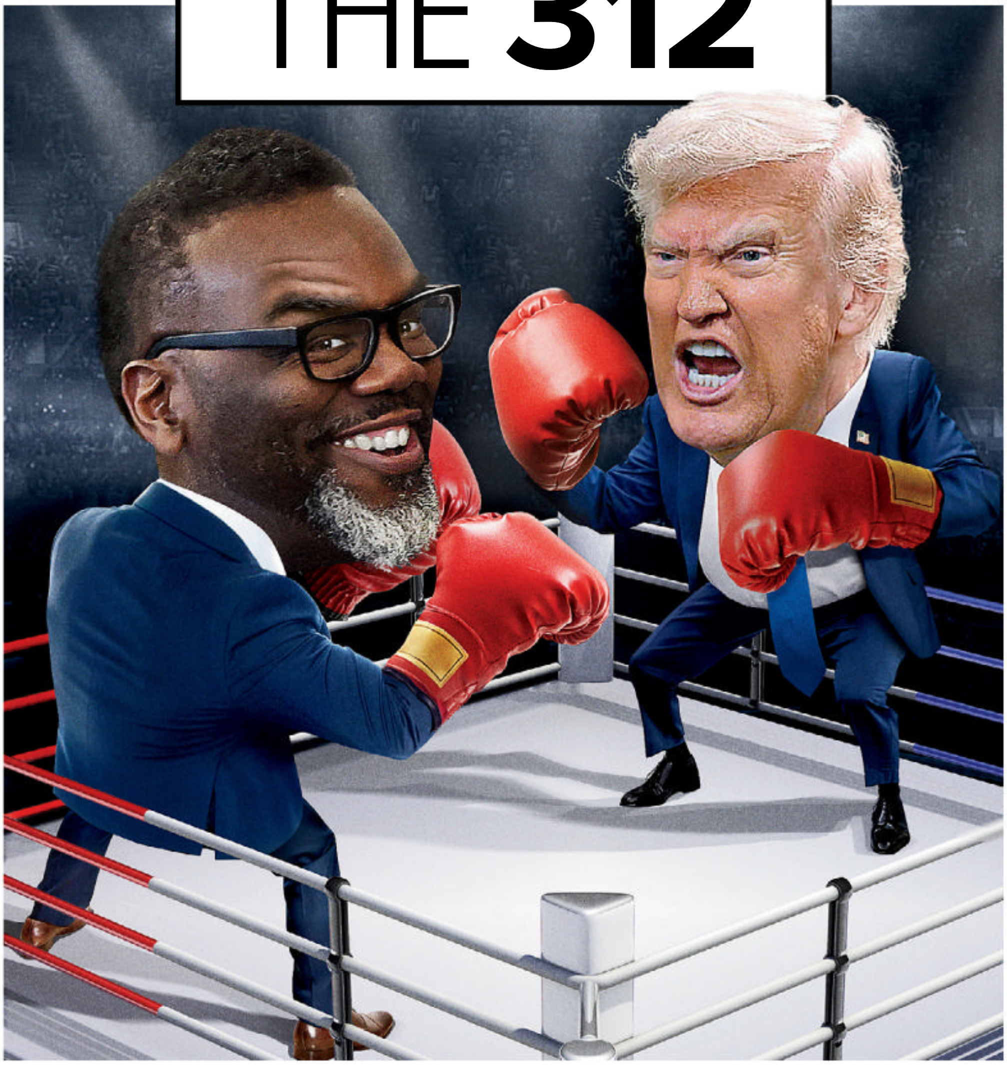
1 The Chicago Sky will retire **Candace Parker's No. 3 jersey** Aug. 25. Yes, she only spent two seasons here, but she did win us a title and is from Chicago (OK, Naperville).

2 Still smarting over the state's refusal to lower the **sales tax on school supplies** from 6.25 percent to 1.25 percent for a six-day period this month? Head to Iowa or Missouri, which offer such a break the first weekend of August.

3 With six City Council members identifying as democratic socialists, the most among big cities, Chicago seems a fitting host for the **Democratic Socialists of America's convention**, Aug. 8–10.

4 The **Savannah Bananas**, baseball's Harlem Globetrotters, make their first local appearances Aug. 15–16 at Rate Field. Expect on-field dancing and wacky rules like fan-caught foul balls counting as outs. Yet this team still won't be as comical as the Sox.

PHOTOGRAPH: MICHAEL REAVES/GETTY IMAGES



The Right Enemy

Can tangling with Trump provide a path back to popularity—and even reelection—for Mayor Johnson?

By EDWARD McCLELLAND

THERE'S AN OLD SAYING IN WAR AND IN POLITICS: THE ENEMY OF MY ENEMY IS MY friend. For Mayor Brandon Johnson, understanding that might just be the secret to getting reelected – something that once seemed unfathomable.

When Johnson made a Sunday pulpit appearance in May at Apostolic Church of God in Woodlawn, he hadn't set out to become a target of Donald Trump. But when he boasted of having six Black officials in his cabinet and increasing opportunities for Black contractors, the MAGA outrage machine went into overdrive: End Wokeness, an anonymous account, posted Johnson's remarks on X, where they were viewed a million times, including by the assistant U.S. attorney general for civil rights, Harmeet K. Dhillon, who retweeted them with the comment "No bueno." The next day, Dhillon wrote a letter to Johnson, promising to investigate his administration

Photo illustration by JOE DARROW

for racial discrimination, even invoking the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

It was an extraordinary escalation stemming entirely from social media outrage. But Johnson, for his part, didn't back down: He called Trump a "monster" who "would much rather have administrations that reflect the country club, period." Clifford Zimmerman, a civil rights expert at Northwestern's Pritzker School of Law, tells *Chicago* that the Justice Department's probe has no chance of standing up in court: "All this is saying is you've ID'ed people who were Black in your administration. It doesn't say he hired them *because* they were Black."

However flimsy the case, the clash served a purpose for both Trump and Johnson: It's red meat for their political bases. MAGA doesn't like Chicago and its lefty mayor. Johnson's voters don't like Trump. Win-win.

For a mayor with an approval rating of less than 7 percent at the time, whose reelection had already been written off by many political observers, the chance to get on the president's bad side was a political gift. The only politician less popular among Chicago voters than Johnson may be Trump. By pursuing a decidedly anti-MAGA agenda – openly promoting diversity efforts, standing up for undocumented immigrants, and firing back at the president – Johnson is making himself an enemy of Chicago's enemy. As *The Wall Street Journal*'s conservative editorial board asked after the kerfuffle over Johnson's comments: "Is President Trump making an in-kind donation to Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson's reelection campaign?"

The city of Chicago, of course, has long been a foil for Trump. But Johnson hadn't personally been in his cross hairs as much as some other Democratic politicians, not least Governor JB Pritzker. Whether for reasons of principle or politics, Johnson hasn't backed down after the Trump administration's threats. In June, he went on the offensive, encouraging Chicagoans to demonstrate against raids by Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Calling Trump a "tyrant," he urged "all of Chicago to resist in this moment," because "whatever particular vulnerable group is being targeted today, another group will be next." Johnson also vowed to refuse ICE requests for data on immigrants who applied for benefits through the CityKey ID program. Chicagoans seem to be responding: A new poll, released in mid-June, showed the mayor's approval rating sharply higher, at 26 percent.

Just as beating up on Chicago is good politics in Trump world, getting on Trump's bad side could boost Johnson's chances in the 2027 mayoral election, says local political strategist Jake Lewis: "2026 is going to be all about Trump, 2027 is going to be all about Trump. The question is going to be: Who is best positioned to push back on Donald Trump? Whether it's immigration, attacks on environmental regulation, abortion, this mayor has shown his values are aligned with the city. Now, can he effectively use the levers of government to push back against the feds?"

> **"The question [in the next mayoral election] is going to be: Who is best positioned to push back on Donald Trump?"**
>
> *—Jake Lewis, political strategist*

That will be key. Every mayoral candidate in the 2027 race – anyone who wants to win, anyway – will be able to say they're anti-Trump. But if Johnson can point to specific policy wins, that would give him a much-needed edge.

Just look at other states. In California, Governor Gavin Newsom, thought to be eyeing the White House in 2028, dared Trump to arrest him and sued the president over federalizing the National Guard in Los Angeles to crack down on protests over Trump's deportation efforts, calling it "an unmistakable step toward authoritarianism." That has raised Newsom's stock as a presidential contender.

"Trump's antics will help Brandon," says longtime political strategist Delmarie Cobb. What happened in Los Angeles is just one front in Trump's ongoing campaign against America's largest cities, which gives mayors the opportunity to step into the ring with Trump – and into the spotlight with their constituents. "That puts Brandon in a more advantageous position," Cobb says. "Can he elevate his profile just like Gavin Newsom and [Los Angeles Mayor] Karen Bass?"

But Becky Carroll, a public affairs and communications consultant who worked in Mayor Richard M. Daley's administration, is skeptical that picking fights now with Trump will benefit Johnson in an election two years away. She thinks that voters will ultimately focus on the totality of Johnson's four-year record. "This is going to be one moment in time of a hundred," Carroll says. "I don't think people vote on a moment in time. Voter memories don't stick around too long. Using [a conflict with the president] for your own political gain is not a winning strategy."

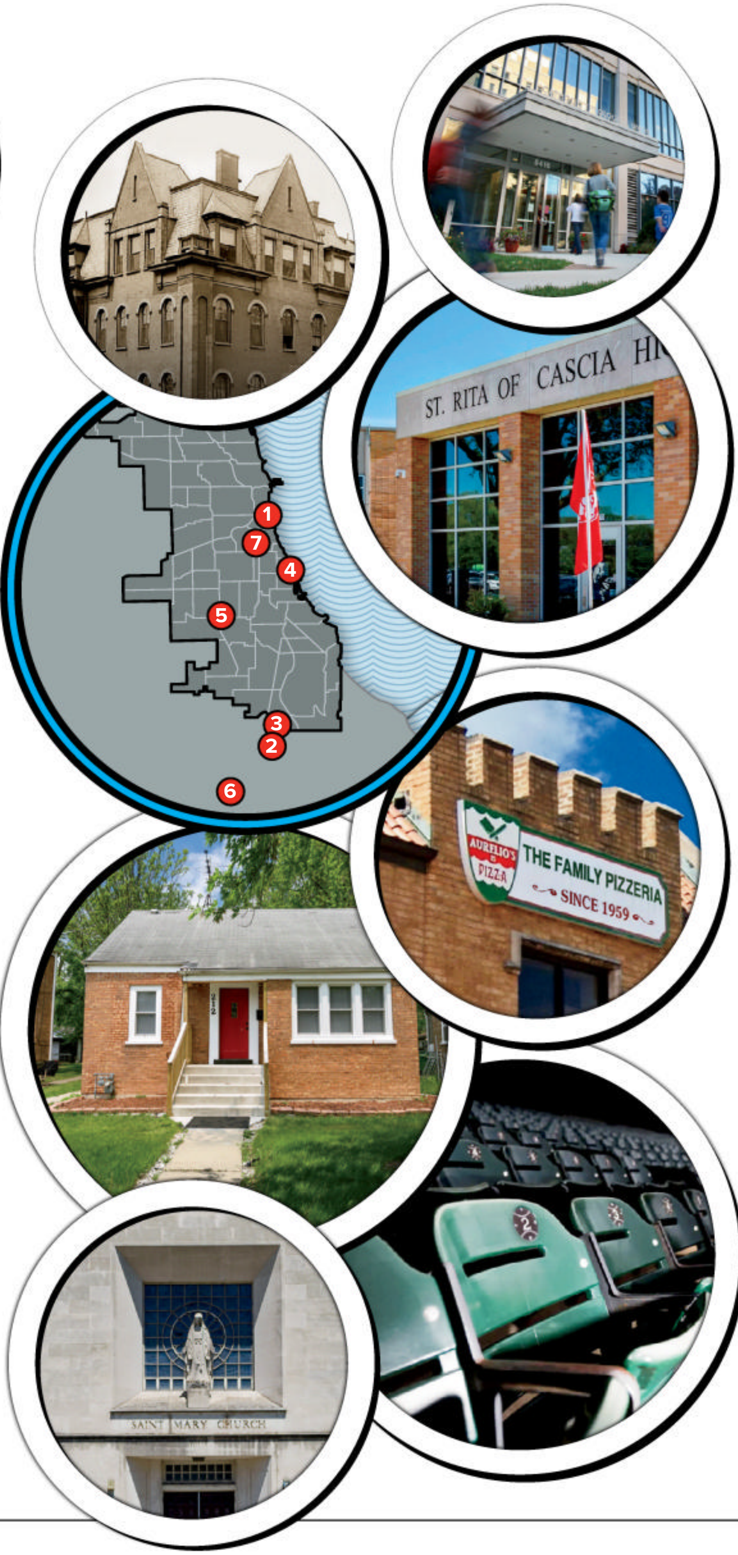
And indeed, there's evidence that tangling with the Trump administration gets you only so far. In New Jersey, the mayor of Newark, Ras Baraka, was arrested during a protest at an immigration detention center. While it undoubtedly boosted Baraka's profile, even translating to a polling surge in the gubernatorial primary, it wasn't nearly enough to get him over the line: Baraka won 20 percent of the vote – good for second place but 13 points behind the winner.

Likewise, standing up to Trump isn't the only issue on which voters will judge Johnson. They care about crime, which is going down. They care about property taxes, which are going up. But now Johnson at least has a potential path to reelection, which he didn't have before.

Good politics often consists of choosing the right enemies. Johnson didn't even have to do that. In this case, the right enemy chose him. ▣

The Pope Slept Here

Before becoming the Vatican's VIP, Leo XIV was better known around these parts as Bob Prevost. Here's a tour of his local haunts. By JOANNA MARSZAŁEK



1 INSIGHT HOSPITAL

2525 S. Michigan Ave.

The future pope was born here, at what was then Mercy Hospital, in 1955. Well, not actually *here*. Back then, the hospital was located on the block just to the east. That building (pictured) was torn down after the new one went up in 1968. The space is now a parking lot.

2 CHILDHOOD HOME

212 E. 141st Pl., Dolton

Visitors and media from near and far—as well as police parked out front—are the new normal on this unassuming south suburban street. Dolton is maneuvering to acquire the modest brick abode, which the Prevost family sold in 1996, and all the empty lots and homes on the block have been bought up since the pope's election. Leave your prayer requests in a box set up outside one neighbor's house.

3 ST. MARY OF THE ASSUMPTION

310 E. 137th St.

This now-closed church is where little Bobby Prevost received his sacraments, served as an altar boy, and sang in a choir. Visitors were allowed in for a few days in May following the pope's election, but the deteriorated building is now boarded up again. Fresh flowers frequently decorate the front steps.

4 CATHOLIC THEOLOGICAL UNION

5416 S. Cornell Ave.

A life-size cardboard cutout of Leo in the lobby and perhaps a bus full of tourists now welcome you. But it was in the school's previous location, across the street at 5401 South Cornell, in what's now an apartment building, that Prevost earned his master of divinity in 1982.

5 ST. RITA OF CASCIA HIGH SCHOOL

7740 S. Western Ave.

A huge Vatican flag now flies in front of this Augustinian prep school, though it was at an old location, on 63rd Street and Claremont Avenue, that a newly ordained Father Bob started his ministry, as a math and physics substitute teacher. Images on the electronic display board outside alert those driving by to the school's most famous honorary alumnus.

6 AURELIO'S PIZZA

18162 Harwood Ave., Homewood

The oldest of the chain's locations knows how to celebrate (read: cash in on) the new pope, with entrance banners proclaiming this spot as a Prevost favorite. You'll find photos posted of the pontiff's visit here last August. Sadly, you can't enjoy your Poperoni pie at the table where he ate (now dubbed the "pope's table"), as diners are no longer seated there. A wooden church-style high-back seat was added for gravitas.

7 RATE FIELD

333 W. 35th St.

It was in section 140, row 19, seat 2 that the future pope cheered on the White Sox during Game 1 of the 2005 World Series. The section entrance, now marked with pope artwork, has become a popular selfie spot, though the exact "holy seat" bears no signage.

PHOTOGRAPHY: (POPE) GETTY; (INSIGHT, HOME, ST. MARY, RATE FIELD, AURELIO'S) *CHICAGO TRIBUNE*; (THEOLOGICAL UNION, ST. RITA) COURTESY OF SCHOOLS

66 to AUSTIN

VOX

The Celebrity Channeler

Deft impressions on social media have made Matt Friend a rising comedy star. Interview by MIKE THOMAS

MATT FRIEND COMMANDS attention. A facile talker with a resonant bass timbre and the energy of a small nuclear reactor, the 27-year-old Chicago-raised comedian is a charmingly formidable presence. It doesn't hurt that he's 6-foot-4 and a snappy dresser. Also, he was deemed "sexy" by none other than *People* magazine, so there's that.

After he began doing standup while attending New York University, Friend's career grew in fits and starts, but lately it's been by leaps and bounds, thanks to his spot-on impressions. Videos of him imitating famous people *to their faces* – primarily on the street and on the red carpet – have been a hit on social media. Most of the celebrities seem delighted. (Bill Maher, not so much.) Friend's ever-expanding arsenal of voices includes those of Donald Trump, Barack Obama, Jeff Goldblum, Stanley Tucci, Nicolas Cage, Jennifer Coolidge, Paul Giamatti, and hundreds of others.

Though he now resides in New York, the Francis W. Parker School grad chatted with *Chicago* while back in town recently. (His parents still live in Lincoln Park.) He joked: "I can picture the article: 'We sat in the crowded restaurant. As Friend became different voices, I wondered, Can he ever be himself?' "

The answer? "Yes, I can." But it's more fun being someone else.

Q: You're an old soul in a young body. How did that come to be?

A: I watched *Austin Powers* when I was 4 years old. That's the movie that got me obsessed with comedy. And I remember reading Judd Apatow's book; he would go to the library [to look up articles on old comedians]. I had YouTube, and I somehow discovered Ed Sullivan and Jackie Mason. I remember wanting to dress up like the Beatles and sing "Love Me Do," which is normal for someone born in 1998. Then I would recreate Elvis singing. For whatever reason, I was very drawn to impressions. And I'm not a nepo baby, but my dad's roommate in college at Tufts was Hank Azaria [who performs multiple

Photograph by EVAN JENKINS

Welcome to ALTON
HAMEL ILLINOIS
ILLINOIS 66

WHERE THE MOTHER ROAD *Meets the River Road*

Celebrate 100 years of road tripping in the only place in America where the Mother Road of Route 66 meets the scenic beauty of the Great River Road. Follow the neon signs to the It's Electric Neon Sign Park, dine at historic Route 66 roadside cafes, take a walk through the river bluffs and prairies and relax with a glass of locally crafted wine beside the Mighty Mississippi River.

Your one-of-a-kind adventure begins at **www.RiversandRoutes.com.**

GREAT RIVERS & ROUTES OF SOUTHWEST ILLINOIS

enjoy illinois

ILLINOIS 66 1926 – 2026 100 YEARS

voices on *The Simpsons*], so that was a big inspiration.

Q: How do you go about formulating an impression? What's the process?

A: I watch a lot of movies. I watch a lot of shows. I listen to interviews. And then suddenly I just start to hear the voice – it's kind of buzzing in my head. I don't really think about it as a process. Like Don Rickles said, "Comedy is a personality." So much of this is just what I've already been doing. I'll walk down the street as King Charles and go [in a stuffy English accent], "Oh my God, it's so great. Skies are blue. The birds are chirping. I wonder what Camilla's tits look like today."

Q: Are there always voices in your head?

A: Always. It doesn't turn off. I'm always thinking, Where's the bit in this? And there's always people to add. There's a Chicago pope. I'm not going to take that and run with it? He's the first American virgin to win an election since Cory Booker. I'm kidding, Cory.

Q: Your initial goal was to get on *Saturday Night Live*. Has your success changed that?

A: I mean, if they came to me and were like, "We want you to do it," that would obviously be amazing. But if I spend too much time worrying about the acceptance of these institutions, that'll take time away from what I'm able to create. I'm very focused on making content, creating opportunities for myself. The reality is, I'm doing things now that you used to have to be on that show to be able to do.

Q: When Johnny Carson was a kid, he was very into magic. His parents both encouraged and were annoyed by it. Was it the same for you with impressions?

A: If only he could have mastered the magic of a prenup: "Here's a trick: I'm going to make my net worth disappear." No, my parents fully nurtured it. I know about the complicated relationship that Carson had with his mother. *My* mother drove me to this interview. I'm not even kidding. Enormously supportive.

Q: But she would give you a look if you said something out of line as a kid?

A: Yeah, she would give me these signals at the dinner table, like eyes wide open or shaking her head, when I'd say something precocious like, "My uncle's looking fatter today. Do you really need dessert?" – trying to do a Rickles or something. I'm the youngest of three, so I think at a certain point, my parents were like, "Fuck it, he'll be fine. He'll figure it out."

Q: You're not a political comic, but there's a political element to your impressions.

A: The impressions, the observations, the political jokes. But you can't come to my show and tell me that I'm doing just one side, because I'm not.

Q: Not long ago you had a MAGA heckler at one of your shows. What happened?

A: I was about to go onstage, and the manager of this place was like, "There's someone suspicious here." Just what you want to hear before you go onstage. And then this guy in a MAGA hat and a sparkly jacket – which was a great contradiction, because his outfit was so queer that even George Santos wouldn't put it on – starts to get closer to the stage, and he's popping pills. I joke that he's doing more drugs than Hunter Biden and Don Jr. combined. He's starting to flip me off. And then he's reaching into his pocket. I'm like, What's he going to take out? And then it escalated to the point where he was kind of yelling. We had to remove him. I joked that we found out the man's name later: It was Pete Hegseth.

> **"I'm doing things now that you used to have to be on [*Saturday Night Live*] to be able to do."**

Q: When you were standing next to Obama doing Obama, were you nervous?

A: It was so crazy. I'm in this hotel, and you would not know he was there – it was very low-key. I go up eight floors. Then you're starting to see the security. I'm in this little waiting room with two other creators who were going to interview him. I was last. I walk into the room, and he goes [in Obama's voice], "Matt, how are you? It is good to see you. Come on in here. I love your videos. Michelle likes them, too." And I'm freaking out. I did all of his greatest hits. I memorized his 2012 acceptance speech at McCormick Place. I was there. "Tonight, more than 200 years after a former colony won the right to determine its own destiny …" I just keep going, and he's like, Holy shit. Then I sang "Amazing Grace" and made fun of when he made a jump shot and went, "That's what I do!" He was dying. I also debated him as Trump, and then I took out my Mitch McConnell glasses. He goes, "You got to put those away. That is giving me PTSD."

Q: Hank Azaria and John Stamos are two of your mentors. What have they told you?

A: My dad, too. And [Harvey] Weinstein, but we don't talk about that. When I told Hank while in college that I was thinking about doing this, he was like, "Do a play, and start to write your own [material]." General advice. But I don't think he anticipated what would happen and how quickly. I think he figured it would take some time. And it still will: I have big things I want to do. Now the advice is shifting to managing other things, like recognizability and navigating agents and managers. This is not a normal business. We're creating our own path here. But having him to bounce thoughts off of is a very powerful thing. With Stamos, we met during the pandemic. He followed me on TikTok and we started to exchange [messages]. I think he liked my vibe. Maybe it was a little Bob Saget-esque, I don't know. But then John invited me over to his house. We played music and [talked] comedy and were just instantly connecting.

Q: You've had help from people, but you are also making a lot of your own luck.

A: I'm hustling. And I'm a product of my generation. I'm not going to lose that organic social media direct-to-fan connection. That's the basis. And now I'm touring, I'm shaking hands with people, I'm kissing babies. Not really. But it's like I'm running for election. I really value meeting people one on one. I'm lucky to have people starting to figure out who I am and what I can do. But I feel like a lot of what I can do hasn't even been seen yet.

HOLY TRINITY
HIGH SCHOOL
SINCE 1910

ROOTED IN UNITY, SOARING IN PURPOSE

APPLY TODAY

At Holy Trinity, you'll spend time thinking about how you can best connect with yourself and with others. In our small-by-design environment, you'll consider your values and the ways you can influence positive change.

Explore Holy Trinity's community
Learn about scholarships
Schedule your campus visit
Start your application

Learn More

Our Website
www.holytrinity-hs.org

Conveniently located in the Wicker Park neighborhood
1443 W Division St Chicago, IL 60642

HARMONY SQUARE
GRAND OPENING
JULY 18

Tinley Park

SUMMER
LiFE
AMPLiFiED

VisitTinleyPark.com

For event parking and to stay up to date with the latest event information please visit:
TinleyPark.org/SpecialEvents

BENCHES ON THE AVENUE
Favorite Food Moments | May - Oct | Along Oak Park Avenue

FARMERS MARKET
Saturdays | June 7 - Oct 11 | 8:00 a.m. -12:30 p.m.

ALE TRAIL
Wednesdays | June 4 - August 27 | 5:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.

CRUISE NIGHTS
Tuesdays | June 3 - September 9 | 5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
No Cruise Night August 5

BLOCK PARTY
July 19-20 | Saturday 2 - 10 p.m Sunday 12:00 - 7:00 p.m.
Harmony Square Grand Opening | 173rd Street to Zabrocki Plaza

SUMMER AT HARMONY SQUARE
Visit TinleyPark.org/Harmony Square for the full schedule for all your summer fun at Harmony Square.

MUSIC IN THE PLAZA
7:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.
June 21 | Hoodwink'd
June 28 | Simple Men and Southern Nights
July 26 | ARRA
August 9 | Boy Band Night
August 23 | 7th Heaven
September 13 | One of These Nights
September 27 | Sons of Chicago

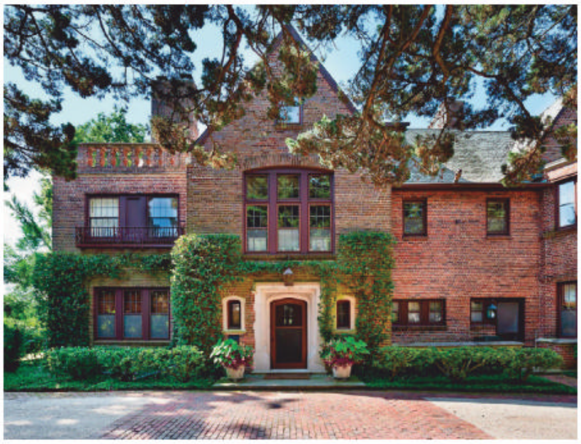
Music in the Plaza Presenting Sponsors
delta sonic
Bettenhausen
BettenhausenAuto.com

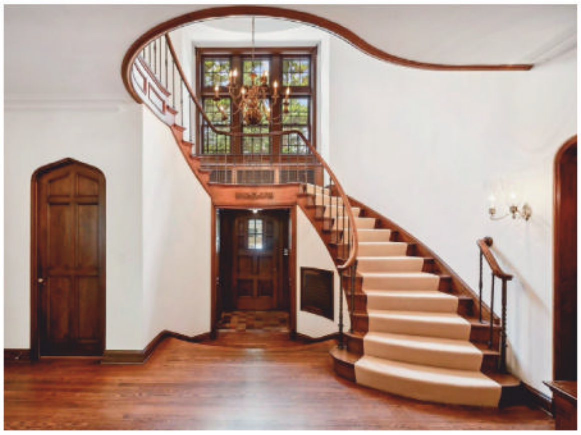
LISTING OF THE MONTH

Adams Family Manor

Old-school style pervades this mini estate in Winnetka.

By THOMAS CONNORS





WHEN PLUTOCRAT JOHN Quincy Adams, who was distantly related to *the* JQA, settled into a fine Tudor pile in Winnetka in 1927, it wasn't exactly an aspirational move. His father owned the largest farm in Iowa (which he monitored from the seat of a chauffeur-driven Pierce-Arrow), operated the local bank, and kept a place in Miami Beach. So living well was in John Quincy's blood, but farming, no matter how gentlemanly, wasn't for him. He made his life in Chicago, where he served on the board of the CTA and was a director of the Continental Illinois National Bank. His home – a 6,639-square-foot, six-bedroom manor situated on 1.7 acres at 22 Indian Hill Road – is now on the market for $4.6 million.

The residence was designed by Chicago-born architect Edwin Clark, who attended Yale before enrolling at what is now the Illinois Institute of Technology. Well born himself, he designed a number of North Shore homes, as well as Brookfield Zoo and the recently renovated Plaza del Lago in Wilmette, recognized as one of the first shopping centers.

The English-inspired home Clark created features a sweeping central staircase, ornamented plaster ceilings, six fireplaces, and loads of wood paneling. The ample common spaces include a family room, dining room, living room, den, and library. There is a full-size laundry room, and the large kitchen and pantry can easily handle a crew of caterers. A raised wooden deck adjacent to the sunroom, an expansive terrace off a large screened porch, and a balcony outside the primary bedroom suite all overlook the broad lawn and a formal flower garden. In addition to a greenhouse and Har-Tru tennis court, the property comes with a three-car coach house outfitted with guest accommodations. What can you say? Grandeur runs in the family. C

THE ENDORSEMENT

Listening to the Detectives

An Elgin police podcast helps solve old crimes.

BY AMY CAVANAUGH

■ I listen to a lot of true-crime podcasts, but it's rare that one explores a case in my own backyard — and even rarer for that case to be solved so quickly. In January, the Elgin Police Department's cold case unit released the first episode of *Somebody Knows Something.* The initial season covered the case of Karen Schepers, who went missing in 1983 after a night out with coworkers. By March the hosts, Detectives Andrew Houghton and Matt Vartanian, had found her car in the Fox River with her remains inside. While the reason she was in the river is unknown, getting answers 42 years later is a win. It's partly thanks to the podcast: "No one called to tell us where to look, but tips gave us information about the bar and the routes she may have taken home," Houghton says.

In season 2, out August 4, Houghton and Detective Chris Hall tackle unsolved homicides from the 1970s. Each of the six episodes will focus on one case. "We'll talk about it, interview someone from the family, and humanize the victim," Houghton says. That's another thing that sets this podcast apart: ensuring that the victim is presented as a full person, not merely a footnote.

SOMEBODY KNOWS SOMETHING
THE ELGIN POLICE COLD CASE PODCAST
POLICE
ELGIN

PHOTOGRAPHY: (HOUSE) LARRY MALVIN; (PODCAST LOGO) COURTESY OF ELGIN POLICE DEPARTMENT

THE REGIMEN

Kristen Kaza

Party promoter, mom blogger, nap evangelist

By WEB BEHRENS

EVEN BEFORE KRISTEN Kaza had twins, mothering had long been one of her talents. The event producer – best known for starting Slo 'Mo, an LBGTQ dance bash now held at Sleeping Village – proudly wears the nickname Party Mom. "I've always approached parties through a maternal lens," she says. Those skills leveled up in 2022 after she developed peripartum cardiomyopathy, a rare heart condition, and delivered her girls 12 weeks early. While she and her wife had their hands full with two fragile infants, Kaza also had to adapt her strategies for self-care. She added a couple of new routines – naps and Pilates – to her de-stressing habits. "I joke that I've been waiting my whole life to be in my 40s," says the Logan Square resident, who hit the big four-oh in June. She recently launched *Mother Lover*, a newsletter for queer parents. Says Kaza: "It's about giving yourself permission to live authentically, because motherhood changes you, no matter what."

RISE AND REST

"My wife has become well practiced in getting up a little earlier, and I'm trying to join her in that, doing a meditation or morning pages [a stream-of-consciousness journaling practice], just to have a little bit of time for myself. Rest is so important to me, and I'll do anything to prioritize it. I wasn't a napper until I got pregnant. Now, if I need to cancel a meeting to take a nap, I will."

CULINARY ZEN

"Cooking is a stress reliever. I've long practiced eating a balanced diet, but now for my heart, I have to be conscious of eating too much salt. I love making snacks from scratch. I roast cashews and make cashew butter, and I make my own granola and trail mix."

PELVIC PUSH

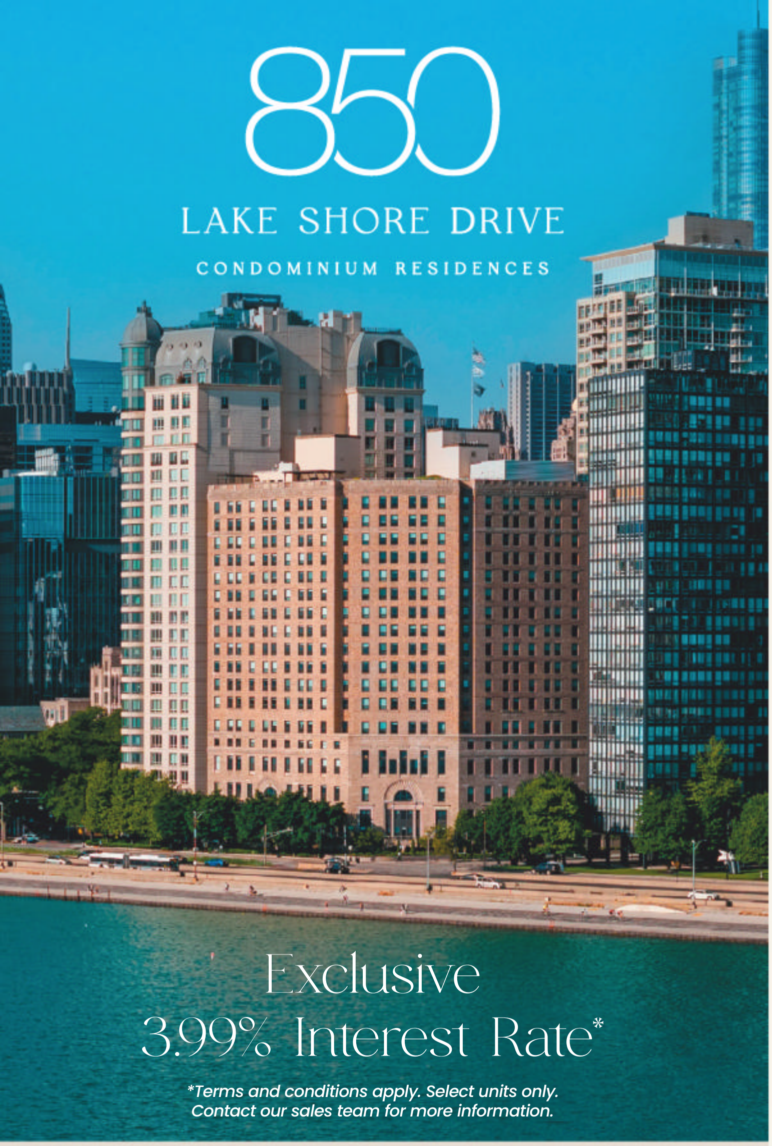
"I go to Club Pilates three times a week. This is the most committed I've ever been to a fitness practice. It's a great workout for anyone, but I think postpartum people, especially, should try it. There's so much focus on your core and on your pelvic health, so it's one of the best things you can do to build back after giving birth. When I can't get to a Pilates class, I'll do yoga at home and sometimes the girls will join."

MOTHER'S LITTLE HELPER

"I read before I go to bed every night. Always physical books. I'm old school. I'll have chamomile tea. And I discovered First Curve Apothecary, a local company that makes this Underworld Potion tincture, which is awesome. I sometimes use that to help me sleep."

PHOTOGRAPHY: (TEA) LUMENST/GETTY IMAGES; (TRAIL MIX) GORDO25/GETTY IMAGES

Photograph by LISA PREDKO



850

LAKE SHORE DRIVE

CONDOMINIUM RESIDENCES

Exclusive
3.99% Interest Rate*

**Terms and conditions apply. Select units only.*
Contact our sales team for more information.

One-Bedrooms from

$427,000

Two-Bedrooms from

$599,000

Three-Bedroom Duplexes from

$1,170,000

OPEN HOUSE

Sundays | 10 AM - 12 PM

850 N. LAKE SHORE DRIVE. CHICAGO, IL 60611 | 312.627.9225 | SALES@850LAKESHOREDRIVE.COM | 850LAKESHORE.COM

*850 Lake Shore Drive is owned by 850 Lake Shore Property, LLC, a single-purpose entity solely responsible for its obligations and liabilities, and is exclusively marketed by Wolf Residential Group, LLC. Prices, square footage, and availability subject to change without notice. Any amenities and project description (including, but not limited to, construction, standard items and build-out descriptions) in any descriptive materials are, at the current time, expected to be provided in the Condominium; however, the actual features and amenities may be excluded or modified, including changes, adjustments and substitutions of any materials, appliances, components, labor or other items. All such improvements are subject to the receipt of all applicable governmental permits and approvals. Seller makes no representation or warranty regarding amenities and features at the Condominium. Seller expressly reserves the right to change or deviate from the amenities listed in their documentation. DEVELOPER LICENSE #2961893.

Wolf Residential

CRESCENT HEIGHTS®

GO

Now Accepting New Listeners

Clinical counselor by day, Jessica Risker swaps her therapy couch for a guitar and flute on her first album in seven years. By JOSHUA M. MILLER

Photography by DANIEL STEWART

IT’S HARD FOR ME TO STICK to just one thing,” says Jessica Risker, who is both a singer-songwriter and a licensed therapist. The balance of running a local counseling practice while making psychedelic-tinged folk “can be hard, but now I’m so happy with the combination. I enjoy putting a lot of different things together in what I hope are fresh ways.”

Her latest thing? A new album, *Calendar Year*, which drops August 1. Risker will promote the release – her first in seven years – with a show at Constellation on September 5 and another in New York City. She was just starting to gain notice as a musician when new motherhood and COVID forced the hiatus. She’s done a lot of growing in the interim. This album draws material from her life, both as a therapist and a mom, and marks a sonic shift to fuller-bodied, richer arrangements.

It was her other passion, though, that drew her to Chicago: She moved here from Missouri in 2002 to pursue a master’s in counseling psychology from Northwestern. Before that, she’d taken a postundergrad year off to focus on music, but ultimately settled on psychology as a livelihood. “I really have always been interested in making music,” says Risker, 46. “But that wasn’t as clear of a path, career-wise.”

***Calendar Year* reflects Risker’s month-by-month pandemic attempt to, as she puts it, “try to feel a little sun on your face, try to make the best of it.”**

After recording for most of a decade under the moniker Deadbeat, Risker took a leap forward in 2018 with the release of *I See You Among the Stars*, her first album under her own name. “It felt creatively like it was getting closer to the sound I was hoping to achieve,” she says. Fittingly, her own star began to shine. NPR featured the title track on *All Songs Considered*, and the popular UK music mag *Shindig!* profiled her.

The birth of her son in 2019, followed by the pandemic, forced her to put a pause on her next album. It was a tough time to be a new mom. “All the little baby activities that I was really looking forward to were cut off,” Risker recalls. “Everyone had their own types of loss, but that was one I felt really poignantly.” Professionally, she transitioned to online counseling sessions: “As you might imagine, a lot of people were seeking therapy during that time.”

She also started a podcast, *Music Therapy With Jessica Risker*, to help others cope with the isolation. With an assist from bandmate Joshua Wentz, she recorded more than 100 episodes, chatting with other musicians and fellow therapists about mental health topics such as dealing with seasonal affective disorder and avoiding music industry pitfalls like alcoholism.

Nonetheless, she found free moments to compose about one song a month in 2020 with her guitar and flute. As *Calendar Year* slowly began to take shape, Risker found herself writing personal, contemplative lyrics that resonated more broadly. “The new album is a lot about the importance of human relationships and feeling connected,” she says. In 2023, she put the podcast on hold to focus on recording the material. Her backing band helped craft a soundscape that includes strings and, courtesy of Wentz, synths and electronics. “He brings this really amazing kind of psychedelic layer to the songs,” Risker says.

With tracks like “RHOJP (Real Housewife of Jefferson Park),” it’s not hard to see where Risker found her inspiration. Frequent walks with her toddler around her Northwest Side neighborhood sparked “Sipping in the Sunshine.” The tune’s serene sound contrasts with lyrics that reflect the dim state of the locked-down world. “It’s not a totally optimistic song, but it’s trying to be,” she says. “You try to feel a little sun on your face, try to make the best of it.”

Meanwhile, “City Hours” ponders the effects of everyone having “a jukebox in your ear,” as Risker sings over its lush hook and bouncy rhythm. She explains: “We’re all kind of lost in our earbuds. We’re engaged but disengaged.”

And right now, Risker is happy to be fully engaged again in pursuing music: “I don’t feel totally fulfilled in my person unless I’m creating something.”

AGENDA

Top 10 reasons to fill up your calendar this month

By WEB BEHRENS

RUSSIAN DOLL

Drag icon Sasha Velour showcases her range in *The Big Reveal Live Show*, featuring Gautier-meets-Guggenheim looks and musical numbers by two legendary Steves: Wonder and Sondheim. *Aug. 1–3. steppenwolf.org/thebigreveal*

HOLLYWOOD ICONOCLAST

The Siskel Film Center's Robert Altman Centennial series includes *Gosford Park*, *Short Cuts*, and his savage 1992 satire *The Player*, whose influence extends to the recent Apple TV+ hit *The Studio*. *Aug. 2–30. siskelfilmcenter.org/altman*

A LYNCHING IN GEORGIA

Sadly still relevant, the Tony-winning Jason Robert Brown musical *Parade* dramatizes the true story of Leo Frank, a Jewish man wrongfully accused of murder in 1913 Georgia. *Aug. 5–17. broadwayinchicago.com*

MORBID DEATHS 'R' US

Clowning, puppetry, dance, and more combine for the next edition of Newport Theater's Edward Gorey–inspired *Uncanny Attic*, this time chronicling the irreverent ends of little Ernest, Fanny, George, and Hector. *Aug. 7–16. theuncannyattic.com*

PAR-T.REX

Toast to 25 years of T. rex fun when the Field Museum hosts Party Like It's Sue-Thousand at Easy Does It in Logan Square. This 21-plus mingle (no cover) offers the chance to meet Field paleontologists. *Aug. 15. fieldmuseum.org*

IT'S BREEZY BEING GREEN

Gravity-defying Cynthia Erivo rockets into Ravinia, where the Tony-winning, Oscar-nominated superstar performs a wicked-cool concert, backed by the CSO. *Aug. 15. ravinia.org*

DANCING WITH THE ALL-STARS

The annual Dance for Life benefit features Chicago's best companies—Joffrey, Giordano, Hubbard Street, and more. The dancers unite for the world-premiere finale, choreographed by Jonathan Alsberry. *Aug. 16. cdhf.org/danceforlife*

AMERICAN BLUES THEATER
THINGS WITH FRIENDS
KRISTOFFER DIAZ

TROUBLED WATERS

What happens during a New York dinner party when the GW Bridge collapses into the Hudson? Playwright Kristoffer Diaz explores that premise in *Things With Friends*, an intriguing world premiere. *Aug. 22–Oct. 4. americanbluestheater.com*

HAIL TO THE CHIEF

Impression king James Austin Johnson made a splash on *SNL* playing Trump *and* Biden. He brings his chameleon act to town for two shows. *Aug. 23. thedentheatre.com*

SPIN CITY

Hot off a July 31 set at Lolla, Chicago's own DJ Heather bookends August with another outdoor appearance, this time at Arc in Union Park. *Aug. 30. arcmusicfestival.com*

PHOTOGRAPHY: (SASHA VELOUR) GREG ENDRIES; (*GOSFORD PARK*) UNIVERSAL; (*UNCANNY ATTIC*) JESSE GENITO; (ERIVO) COURTESY OF RAVINIA FESTIVAL; (DANCERS) TODD ROSENBERG PHOTOGRAPHY; (GRAPHIC) COURTESY OF AMERICAN BLUES THEATER

YOU CAN'T LIVE A FULL LIFE ON AN EMPTY STOMACH.
SCOTT HARRIS
Hospitality
Francesca's
EST.1992
VASILI'S
Davanti Enoteca
Mio modo
Pizzeria & Bakery
FIORE
VINNY'S
Clam Bar
disotto
SHHOSPITALITY.CO

TABLE

del sur
BAKERY & CAFÉ
del sur
THANK YOU

The Ultimate Filipino Crawl

Let us take you on a tour of three buzzy Ravenswood spots.

By AMY CAVANAUGH

From top: Del Sur's Justin Lerias; Kanin's Julius Tacadena; Side Practice's Francis Almeda

Photography by JEFF MARINI

Del Sur

Kanin's barbecue chicken bento box

Side Practice

WITH INGREDIENTS LIKE SWEET-SAVORY LONGANISA SAUSAGE, NUTTY pandan, and earthy ube, Filipino food has firmly taken hold in Chicago over the past decade. Among the many openings featuring the archipelagic country's cuisine are a trio of spots in Ravenswood, all on Damen Avenue and in walkable proximity – including one super-buzzy new bakery (read: long lines). That combination has the makings of a culinary crawl too good to pass up. Here's our stop-by-stop guide to this Filipino bang-bang-bang (to borrow from Louis C.K.).

STOP 1
DEL SUR BAKERY
4639 N. Damen Ave.

The backstory: Justin Lerias, formerly of Big Jones, started out holding pop-ups at Side Practice Coffee, offering pastries that drew on his Filipino heritage. That was such a success that in March he opened this storefront by the Damen Brown Line station. It instantly became the hottest bakery in a city where folks are happy to queue up for carbs.

The order: The soy-caramel-slicked longanisa croissant is a worthy pick, but my top two choices are the Basque cake, topped with pandan cream and a rotating seasonal jam, and the turon Danish, a long, laminated beauty made with caramelized banana jam and vanilla flan.

The tip: On weekends, expect long lines and hour-plus waits. Weekdays are less busy. (When I arrived shortly after the 8 a.m. open on a Friday, the wait was 45 minutes.) There's no indoor seating, so get your box and head north to stop 2—a 15-minute walk or a few minutes on the No. 50 bus.

STOP 2
KANIN
5131 N. Damen Ave.

The backstory: Julius Tacadena, who was born in the Philippines and raised in Hawaii, draws on both places for the menu at his colorful bodega, which has a handful of tables, along with coolers and shelves stocked with Asian drinks and snacks (be sure to snag some ube banana pudding). Like Lerias, he got his start doing pop-ups at Side Practice and opened his own restaurant in March.

The order: Grab some classic Spam musubi or the version with longanisa and egg, which makes for a savory breakfast bite. At 11 a.m., the bento boxes hit the case: The barbecue chicken one includes rice, pickled daikon and ginger, and a sprinkle of furikake.

The tip: If you have trouble finding a table, take your spread with you to eat next door at stop 3, where there's more seating.

STOP 3
SIDE PRACTICE COFFEE
5139 N. Damen Ave.

The backstory: Francis Almeda, the man behind Novel Pizza in Pilsen and Drip Collective in the West Loop, is the consummate connector. He helped Lerias and Tacadena get their businesses off the ground (he's a part owner of Kanin). At this shop, which he opened in 2020, you'll find Volition teas and coffee from local roasters like New Math and Four Letter Word. You can get classic espressos, pour-overs, and drip coffee, but the menu also features rotating Filipino-inflected specials, like a latik latte, made with coconut syrup infused with bay leaf.

The order: The pandan-vanilla latte, a menu staple, is the first thing you should try.

The tip: The shop hosts local food pop-ups, often side projects like Tita Tootsie's, a Filipino food collective that includes Moody Tongue sous chef Bryan Collante. Find out about upcoming events via Instagram (@sidepractice.coffee).

O GLOBAL
WITH MARIANO'S
Eat globally.
Shop locally.
's customers know that we love
But while we're always on the
for local products and vendors,
rs also search the globe to bring
products from around the world
straight to our stores.
fresh
ORGANIC
MAMA DEPANDI
RIGATONI
PENNE

MARIANO'S WELCOMES
Mama DePandi Products!

From Giuliana and Bill Rancic
and Mama DePandi herself!

Now enjoy the most popular
dish at RPM Italian at home

MARIANO'S

marianos.com #MyMarianos

Ice Cream Dreams

From spicy sundaes to classic dips, soft serve seems to be everywhere this summer. Here are our four favorites. By LISA FUTTERMAN

1

Chocolate-and-Peanut-Butter-Dipped Swirl Cone

DAIRY STAR

Dipped cones rule at this classic seasonal ice cream stand. The regular size gets you a tower of soft serve that teeters about seven inches above the cone. There are 13 dip flavors (everything from cotton candy to birthday cake), but a swirl cone encased in a chocolate and peanut butter shell is the order. Don't worry if things get messy—regulars know there's a hose out back. *$6.50. 3472 W. Devon Ave., Lincolnwood*

2

The Chili Crunch

BAOBING BAR

The star dish at the summer-only ice cream shack tucked behind Stephanie Izard's Duck Duck Goat is the Chili Crunch sundae. An unlikely meetup of tamari soft serve, chile crunch, spiced fried wontons, fresh strawberries, and sprigs of cilantro, it hits the sweet-savory intersection perfectly. *$14. 857 W. Fulton Market, West Loop*

3

Matcha-Strawberry Swirl Cone

SUGOI SWEETS

To make her superb matcha soft serve, confectioner Elle Lei infuses housemade oat milk with green tea. It's delicious on its own but even better when swirled with one of her rotating Asian-inflected flavors like black sesame, ube, milk tea, and hojicha. If strawberry is available, get it—the fruity flavor is the perfect complement to grassy matcha. *$5. 937 N. Ashland Ave., Noble Square*

4

Coconut Soft Serve

ZARELLA PIZZERIA & TAVERNA

If there's a better follow-up to the garlicky kale Caesar salad and a spicy vodka tavern-style pie at this new Boka Group hot spot than a dish of refreshing coconut soft serve, we don't know it. Nestled atop chocolate cookie crumble and Amarena cherries, this dairy-free dessert comes topped with flaky sea salt and a drizzle of rich olive oil. *$9. 531 N. Wells St., River North*

THIS MONTH'S OBSESSION

Stuffed Plantain at Mahari

■ As we passed assertively spiced and brightly flavored dishes around the table—salmon rice fritters with mango chutney, a lamb burger with Haitian pikliz and pineapple—a consensus emerged among our omnivorous group that the star of the evening at Mahari was the mushroom-stuffed plantain. To make the vegetarian entrée (a beef version is also available), executive chef Rahim Muhammad hollows out an almost ripe plantain like a canoe, roasts the halves until their edges caramelize, then fills them with mushrooms seasoned like Nigerian suya (grilled meat). They're served atop Creole tomato sauce and share the plate with tangy charred feta and a mound of Caribbean rice and peas. The flavors, like many here, represent the whole African diaspora yet are of a piece. The restaurant's name means "gift" in Swahili, and this dish tastes like one. *$24. 1504 E. 55th St., Hyde Park* –JOHN KESSLER

Photography by JEFF MARINI

NOW
IS OUR MOMENT

WALK TO END ALZHEIMER'S
ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION
WALK TO END ALZHEIMER'S

Now is the moment we've been waiting for. With new treatments emerging in the fight against Alzheimer's and all other dementia, now is the time for hope. But not the time to stop.

Help us keep the momentum going in your community at the Alzheimer's Association Walk To End Alzheimer's®, the world's largest fundraiser to fight the disease.

Join us at alz.org/walk

2025 Walk to End Alzheimer's
Lincoln Park – Chicago
Saturday, October 4, 2025

**Also, look for other Chicago area Walks*

2025 National Presenting Sponsor Edward Jones®

WALK® TO END ALZHEIMER'S
ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION®

REVIEW

A New Standby

Though still a bit uneven, Cafe Yaya, an all-day spot from the Galit team, keeps this critic coming back. By JOHN KESSLER

THE LITTLE HOTEL I FOUND for my family of five was shockingly inexpensive thanks to its location in a peripheral neighborhood that one might describe as the Portage Park of Paris. While there weren't any destination restaurants nearby, we did happen upon the local café. It was old and had seemingly seen better days before a tragic '70s-era renovation. (You know the look: beveled mirrors, chrome accents, burnt sienna carpeting.) Yet it had a terrific covered patio, and the food was always on point. Added bonus: It never seemed to close.

So when Zach Engel, the chef-owner of Lincoln Park's new Cafe Yaya, cited a trip to Paris with his wife and two young daughters as the restaurant's inspiration, I knew exactly where he was going. "We have a weird idea in the States of what 'café' means," he told me. "In Europe, it's a place where you can go for a coffee and croissant at breakfast, have a light lunch, and then go back to for a full dinner. We didn't feel like there was something here that encapsulated all that in Lincoln Park."

When the long-abandoned space next to Galit, Engel's lauded Middle Eastern restaurant, became available at a good price, he and business partner Andrés Clavero seized the opportunity. They opened Cafe Yaya in March, at first serving only breakfast, with coffee and pastries by Galit pastry chef Mary Eder-McClure. Then came a full dinner menu, followed by a more abbreviated lunch one. They began serving a few snackums in the late afternoon and finally debuted Sunday brunch in the upstairs dining room and event space. *Voilà!* All day.

I've been going … and going … and going. I've had everything from coffee and a pastry to a blowout dinner with cocktails and wine – seven meals total. I've tried to experience this place in all its moods and make sense of the mish-mosh menu that reflects Engel's unique background: a rabbi's son from the American South who'd make trips to Israel with his parents and became a cook in New Orleans, specializing in the Levantine cuisine of Palestine and Israel.

After all those meals, though, I still consider Cafe Yaya a work in progress. If you're a fan of Engel's cooking at Galit (many people, myself included, consider him one of Chicago's best chefs) and want to try everything at his sophomore project, you'll find it promising but uneven. Nonetheless, if you're contemplating a spontaneous meal and Cafe Yaya pops into mind, go. The menu is all about meeting your appetite and hankerings, and becoming a place to rely on when flashier restaurants don't appeal.

Unlike trendier all-day cafés that trade in algorithmically sanctioned minimalist calm and are powered by matcha and avocado toast, Cafe Yaya feels like it has been there forever. Engel's twin sister, Ilana Engel, devised a logo that looks like a Roman mosaic, and Siren Betty Design ran with the theme, painting bucolic frescoes on the exposed brick and focusing the long, narrow room around three points: a wood-burning oven, a bar stocked with beverage director Scott Stroemer's eclectic wines, and a pastry case displaying the day's offerings.

Eder-McClure has a lot of fun bringing Middle Eastern flavors to savory pastries. Her za'atar twist tastes like a spice-dusted Palestinian flatbread collided with a Danish, and it's something I could eat on the regular. Also great is her shakshuka bun, a crusty challah cup filled with seasoned tomatoes and a baked egg. You might find a lovable

Photography by JEFF MARINI

Engel and Clavero

Pork schnitzel

cardamom kouign-amann, all buttery layers and crisp sugary glaze, among the half-dozen options that rotate daily. Consider ordering a “breakfast sammie,” though my merguez sausage and egg version arrived cold in a too-big challah bun with tahini inexplicably on the side. Maybe you’ll have better luck.

That same element of chance appears when you crack open the dinner menu, which is a delightful document to explore but a hard one to figure out. As at Galit, dips, spreads, and bread take up a lot of real estate, but here it’s all à la carte and offbeat. There’s no hummus, but there is a caramelized onion and miso labneh (a fun take on the French onion trend), pimento cheese, and a sweet black garlic tahini. Now what do you dip with? A nice but boring basket of bread? A flaky Yemenite flatbread called malawach? Crackers? It’s a shame you can’t get an assortment of all, particularly when it’s two of you dining.

CAFE YAYA
★½
2431 N. Lincoln Ave., Lincoln Park
■ **Dinner for two** $150
■ **Tip** Look for the bakery specials, like half-priced pastries in the afternoon and delicious challah loaves on Fridays.

★ Recommended
★★ Very good ★★★ Excellent
★★★★ Exceptional

When my wife and I ate at the bar, we didn’t care for the dips as much as those next door, but the rest of the meal was spot on. We slurped perfectly iced oysters and split a pork schnitzel that kept its crunch under a heap of maitake mushrooms and parsley in a bright lemon sauce. Steak fries the size of ingots made for ideal sauce soppers. We also enjoyed chatting up the personable bartender and having a few tasters of wine before settling into our glasses: a white blend from Castel Pujol in Uruguay for her, and a skin-contact Pinot Grigio from Kobal in Slovenia for me.

I wish a big dinner with old friends had landed as well. Some dishes, like shrimp rémoulade with fried green tomatoes or grilled sweetbreads in caramelized onion gravy, were acidic enough to obliterate all other tastes. The mushroom-eggplant stew and a crock of collard greens with baked feta were unattractive and muddy. A wood-oven-roasted half chicken looked gorgeous but was dry to the bone. Nor did our round of cocktails impress; I’m never going to be on team tahini-washed vermouth.

And yet, this food is interesting, the service (counter during the day, full at night) is great, and I always want to go back. At lunchtime, a salad with perfect greens and (blessedly juicy) chicken shawarma wasn’t a gourmet revelation but just what my body and soul needed. And for an early-evening bite with a friend, we split a carafe of easygoing white, a tall lamb burger on a puffy challah bun with tangy, pickley condiments, and a basket of the best shoestring fries this side of Mickey D’s. At that moment I felt so grateful that Cafe Yaya exists, because there was no place I’d rather have been.

NEIGHBORHOOD FIND

Second Life

RENDANG REPUBLIC
3355 N. Clark St., Lake View
■ **Perfect order** Lumpia, beef rendang, Duck Inn-do hot dog

■ When we last saw John Avila, he was slinging Indonesian food at Minahasa in Revival Food Hall. The chef built a fan base there for beautifully seasoned dishes, but slow traffic forced him to close.

It always felt like his food deserved its own space, which it now has in Rendang Republic, a counter-service spot he opened with Rizal Hamdallah in April near Wrigleyville. The location is just right: People in Cubs gear sit side by side with folks of Indonesian heritage and neighborhood residents like me. We’re all here for dishes like Mama Betty’s lumpia, a delightfully greasy egg roll stuffed with chicken and shrimp. And if you’re new to Indonesian food, start with the beef rendang, tender chunks of beef braised in coconut milk, lemongrass, cinnamon, and other spices and served with rice, creamy collard greens, pickled veggies, and sambal for heat.

Eventually, try the clever Indonesian-Chicago mash-ups, which are new to this location. There’s beef rendang on a roll with giardiniera for a twist on Italian beef, and a chicken hot dog made by the Duck Inn that Avila drags through a garden of sambal aïoli, a pickled relish, tomato, fried shallots, cilantro, and green onion, tucking it into a poppy seed bun. It’s genius: Avila has created a dish that’s both a clear homage to the classic and entirely its own thing.
–AMY CAVANAUGH

Duck Inn-do hot dog

ADVERTISEMENT

City of Hope® CANCER CENTER CHICAGO

PROSTATE CANCER: WHAT MEN NEED TO KNOW

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer affecting American men over the age of 50, with about 1 in 8 receiving that diagnosis in his lifetime.

According to the American Cancer Society, the Illinois incidence rate is 122.8 cases per 100,000 men, surpassing the national rate of 118.3. Of the roughly 314,000 cases diagnosed in the U.S. each year, more than 9,000 are in Illinois.

Because prostate cancer often doesn't cause any symptoms, prostate cancer screenings – which are as simple as a blood test for the prostate-specific antigen, or PSA – are crucial in detecting the cancer early when it is most curable. Still, about two-thirds of men between the ages of 50 and 69 who should be getting screened are not. Due to varying guidelines, it is always recommended that men discuss PSA screening with their doctor. It is important to note that certain individuals, such as Black men, are at a much higher risk for prostate cancer; Black men are also more likely to die of the disease.

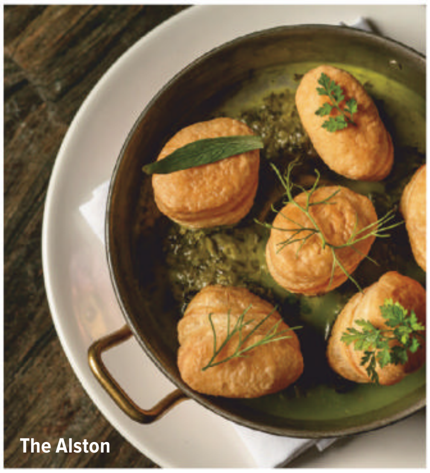
Outcomes for men with prostate cancer, even with metastatic disease, have dramatically improved over the past 60 years thanks to advances in screening, diagnosis and treatment. At City of Hope, which has multiple Illinois locations, research efforts include following up with survivors to detect and manage long-term side effects and improve quality of life. We are now managing prostate cancer patients for years, if not decades, and we expect the majority to live out their normal lives.

Walter Stadler, M.D., F.A.C.P., is chief clinical officer and medical oncologist at City of Hope® Cancer Center.

To learn more about personalized cancer treatment options at City of Hope's locations in Lake County, Downtown Chicago or the North Shore, visit cityofhope.org/chicago.

The Hot List

10 places everyone's talking about (in order of heat)



The Alston

Friends of Friends

1 **THE ALSTON** **What** A splashy new steakhouse from Jenner Tomaska (Esmé) and the Fifty/50 Group lands downtown. **Why** With caviar bumps and $300 seafood towers, this is the place to ball out. **Where** *750 N. State St., River North*

2 **NIC + JUNIOR'S** **What** Junior Borges explores the intersection of Brazilian and Italian cuisine at this upscale spot. **Why** We're talking plates like chicken piri-piri Parmigiano. **Where** *405 N. Wabash Ave., River North*

3 **FRIENDS OF FRIENDS** **What** Heisler Hospitality and Meadowlark's Abe Vucekovich team up for a casual joint. **Why** Sip a Big & Spicy, with jalapeño rum, tropical fruits, and gochujang. **Where** *2001 W. Grand Ave., West Town*

4 **PROXI** **What** The West Loop staple shifts its focus to go all in on Asian flavors. **Why** The food, like a decadent king crab motoyaki slicked with ponzu aïoli, is better than ever. **Where** *565 W. Randolph St., West Loop*

5 **TAQUERIA CHINGÓN** **What** The beloved taco joint finds a new, larger home. **Why** We missed that duck carnitas taco with orange and date purée something fierce during the transition. **Where** *817 W. Fulton Market, West Loop*

6 **MIRRA** **What** The Mexican-Indian resto launches brunch. **Why** Uttapam – huitlacoche-and-mushroom-filled pancakes with eggs and coconut chutney – will set you up right for the day. **Where** *1954 W. Armitage Ave., Bucktown*

7 **SOLANA** **What** A new rooftop bar at the Robey. **Why** Sip frozen passionfruit margs and take in the view. **Where** *1616 N. Milwaukee Ave., Bucktown*

8 **TRILOKAH** **What** Mount Prospect's South Indian resto moves to the city. **Why** Killer dosas and kadala curry. **Where** *2239 N. Clybourn Ave., Lincoln Park*

9 **CHEF'S TABLE** **What** Do you miss Claudia? You can now enjoy Trevor Teich's food once again at the Astor Club. **Why** The tasting menu brings back beloved bites like his classic Snails in the Woods. **Where** *24 E. Goethe St., Gold Coast*

10 **YOOYEE** **What** A Sichuan newcomer from the owners of Peppercorns Kitchen and Chef Xiong: Taste of Szechuan. **Why** Set your mouth on fire with dishes like brisket noodle soup. **Where** *4925 N. Broadway, Uptown*

PHOTOGRAPHY: (THE ALSTON) KEVIN EDUARD WHITE; (FRIENDS OF FRIENDS) KRISTEN MENDIOLA

Walter Stadler, M.D., F.A.C.P.
Chief Clinical Officer,
City of Hope Chicago
Walter Stadler, MD
Medical Oncology
City of Hope
What happens in our lab doesn't stay in our lab.
We bring our cancer discoveries to you.

Pursuing cancer cures at the speed of life.

With cancer, speed matters. Our cancer discoveries move from our lab to your life, delivering leading edge treatments directly to you. In the hands of **one of the most advanced comprehensive cancer centers in the U.S., with our National Medical Center ranked top 5 in the nation,** we are outpacing cancer with the urgency every diagnosis deserves.

cityofhope.org

City of Hope®
CANCER CENTER
CHICAGO

© 2025 City of Hope

IN THE KITCHEN

Upper Crust

IF YOU ASK JOHN CARRUTHERS, THE BEST Friday pizza night starts on Monday morning. That's because the tavern-style crust he's perfected as the creator of home-based Crust Fund Pizza owes its cracker crunch to a dayslong cold dough fermentation followed by a 12-hour cure. "The cure dries the dough and ensures a crispy crust and a quick bake," he explains. See for yourself with the recipe for his Royko pizza, named for the legendary local columnist and topped with – what else? – the classic Chicago combo of Italian sausage and giardiniera. Nothing beats homemade sauce, but if you opt for store-bought, Carruthers suggests add-ins like fish sauce, Marmite, red wine vinegar, or dried herbs to add umami and balance out the tomato's sweetness. – CATE HUGUELET

CRUST FUND'S ROYKO PIZZA

Makes 2 pizzas
Active time 40 minutes
Total time 1 hour, plus 2 to 7 days for fermentation and curing

3	cups high-protein flour (like King Arthur high-gluten flour), plus more for rolling dough
4	tsp. cornmeal
1¼	tsp. sugar
1	tsp. salt
½	tsp. instant yeast
¾	cup cold filtered water
2	Tbsp. olive oil, plus more for storing
1½	cups pizza sauce
1	cup finely grated Parmesan
2⅔	cups shredded whole-milk, low-moisture mozzarella
1½	cups fresh bulk Italian sausage
2	cups giardiniera, well drained

1

Make the dough: In a food processor fitted with a dough blade, briefly pulse the flour, cornmeal, sugar, salt, and yeast to combine. Add water and 2 tablespoons of olive oil and start the processor again. When the dough comes together and begins to spin around on the blade, count to 30 and stop the machine. Let the dough rest in the processor for 20 minutes, then free it from the blade and process it again for 30 seconds. Divide the dough into two equal balls, coat each with olive oil, and refrigerate them in tightly sealed quart containers or ziplock bags for at least 48 hours or up to 7 days.

2

Roll out the dough: On the morning of the day you plan to make the pizza, sprinkle your countertop with flour, remove a dough ball from the refrigerator, and roll it out into a round. To preserve a circular shape, start the rolling pin at the center of the dough, roll away from you, then turn the dough a quarter rotation. Repeat, lifting the dough occasionally to ensure it's not sticking to the counter, until it's 15 inches across. Place the round on a parchment-lined cutting board and return it to the refrigerator, uncovered, for 8 to 12 hours. Repeat with the remaining dough.

3

Assemble the pizza: Heat a baking steel (or pizza stone) on the center oven rack at 550 degrees (or 500, if that's as high as your oven goes) for 1 hour. Remove one dough round from the refrigerator. Spread it from edge to edge with half the pizza sauce, then top with ¼ cup Parmesan, followed by half the mozzarella. Place half the sausage, pinched into chunks, on top, then randomly scatter half the giardiniera in the spaces between. Sprinkle with an additional ¼ cup Parmesan.

4

Bake the pizza: Slide the pizza, still on its parchment, onto the baking steel. Bake for 5 minutes, then carefully remove the parchment so the crust is in direct contact with the baking steel. Continue baking until the sausage browns and the bottom of the crust has moderate black spotting, 3 to 7 minutes. Remove and cool the pizza on a rack for 2 minutes, then cut it into a grid and serve. Repeat with the remaining dough round.

Photograph by JEFF MARINI

VISUAL COMFORT & CO.
COSMOS 28" RING AND ORB CHANDELIER
DESIGNER: BARBARA BARRY

VISUAL COMFORT & CO.
PERLE 240 CHANDELIER
DESIGNER: SEAN LAVIN

IDLEWOOD
ELECTRIC SUPPLY INC
www.idlewoodelectric.com

HIGHLAND PARK SHOWROOM
114 Skokie Valley Road
Highland Park, IL 60035
847.831.3600

BARRINGTON SHOWROOM
317 W. Northwest Highway
Barrington, IL 60010
847.304.8000

Now is the time to
THINK BIG
AND
DRIVE
CHANGE.
DAY CARE
Cafe
FRESH FRUIT
BOOK STORE
CLINIC
BANK

The diversity of the people and neighborhoods are the heartbeat of the Chicago region. United Way works to ensure every person has equitable access to opportunities and neighborhoods can thrive. With your support, we can invest in continued progress and create a Chicago region where every child has better access to quality education, communities are safer, our neighbors are healthier, incomes increase, and our region prospers.

Now is the time to LIVE UNITED and build a stronger, more equitable Chicago region.
Join us at LIVEUNITEDchicago.org

United Way of Metro Chicago
United Way

@UNITEDWAYCHICAGO @UNITEDWAYCHI

Always In Our Hearts
In Loving Memory of Jeremiah
You Were Loved
Loved & Remembered
#ChicagolandWalk
#Stops
MENTAL HEALTH MATTERS
You Were Loved

WALK WITH US

TO PREVENT SUICIDE

Out of the Darkness Chicagoland Walk

Saturday, September 27, 2025

9:00 AM | Montrose Harbor - Chicago

Register. Volunteer. Donate.

afsp.org/chicago

American Foundation *for* Suicide Prevention
Illinois

OUT OF THE DARKNESS
Community Walks

The Trotter Way

In his new memoir, an acclaimed chef recounts working for a culinary legend—and how their relationship soured.

By CURTIS DUFFY with JEREMY WAGNER

IN THE MID-'90S, AS I BECAME EVEN MORE CAPTIVATED IN MY LATE teen years with becoming a chef, I devoured the Charlie Trotter cookbooks I'd found in an Ohio bookstore, falling in love with his style of food and philosophy. Then, after I got my first computer, I would scour the internet for new information on this guy and his restaurant. I was obsessed.

I moved to Chicago in 2000 solely to work for Charlie.

Working at Charlie Trotter's was like physically living inside one of his books. I was relentlessly pushed to perform at a first-class level of excellence, learning directly from the master himself about innovations in restaurant and kitchen management. It was the hardest job I've ever had, but Charlie gave me a world-class education in the nuanced, sophisticated love affair between ambience, service, cuisine, and wine – a "four pillars" approach I use to this day.

The restaurant was beautiful from top to bottom. Charlie invested in the best, most modern kitchen equipment: custom-made French Bonnet stoves, made-to-order freezers, and a stainless-steel ceiling that ate vented smoke. The wine cellar was a gorgeous room, stocked with the best wines. The small, intimate dining rooms featured lush, cushy carpet and heavy, draped linens. There were beautiful sconces on the walls, and every chair was fabricated by an artist. The china was Limoges and came from Bernardaud, and the serving ware came from Christofle. Every detail was designed to exude luxury and add to the guest's dining experience.

Then there was the cuisine. Charlie was on an entirely different, transcendent level. It wasn't just about being fancy with beluga caviar and truffles. At that time, other restaurants didn't respect vegetables the way they do now, and it was Charlie's uncommon approach to them that won my heart. He would elevate and showcase vegetarian dishes and sauces in new and thoughtful ways, in the presentation and in the overall sensory experience of tasting and touching food, be it seeds, legumes, vegetables, or fruits.

He could take the simplest ingredients and turn them into something mind-blowing and extravagant. Charlie would make a dish pairing 55-plus-year-old balsamic vinegar with marinated portobello mushrooms, then mix that up with garlic, ginger, jalapeño, cilantro, and soy. There was an Asian-style haggis, where he took the internal organs of a sheep – lungs, liver, heart, etc. – and mixed them up with lemongrass, star anise, and ginger, along with traditional suet and stock, and stuffed it all into some type of animal casing.

He used unorthodox methods to motivate the staff, too. We might be asked to give a speech on a certain topic or write a book report or even engage in role-playing to better ourselves and the restaurant. Three days a week, Charlie would bring in a group – we might host underprivileged children or academic scholars one day, firefighters and police officers the next – to be fed gratis from the menu we would serve that night while we, the cooks, would explain the courses to the guests.

The twist? You would be asked to describe a course other than the one you were making that night. So if I were,

"You were never in a comfort zone under Charlie Trotter's roof," writes the author, pictured in the restaurant's kitchen in the early 2000s. "He made sure you weren't just cooking but thinking." ↓

PHOTOGRAPH: COURTESY OF CURTIS DUFFY

say, working the meat station, I might be pulled up to talk about the dessert. If you were the reservationist, Charlie might grab you and say, “Joanne, please come here! We’d love for you to tell the students how we pursue excellence in the kitchen every day.”

I was 24 and terrified to speak in front of 60 people at a time. But that was what was great about it: You were never in a comfort zone under Charlie Trotter’s roof. And he made sure you weren’t just cooking but thinking. It helped us to internalize a mentality of excellence. That’s infectious. You start thinking that way, everyone around you is thinking that way, and it’s this beautiful culture of people wanting nothing more than to just get better every day.

IN THE THREE AND A HALF YEARS I spent at Charlie Trotter’s, I learned a great deal about discipline, skill, service, and curiosity. He felt a chef should be not just happy and fulfilled in his career but also philosophically satisfied.

I’ll attempt to distill the Trotter path:

1. Embrace change

The first year I was there, the restaurant closed for two weeks in late July and early August. Why? Restaurants at that level rely on everybody to be there every single day. When you give people time off here and there, it screws with the system. So the idea is to give everybody time off all at once.

But that didn’t mean there wasn’t any homework. Before that first break, Charlie pulled me into his office and gave me a copy of *The Fountainhead* by Ayn Rand. He was in love with that book. Every cook in his kitchen had read it – some, a few times. It’s one of those books that have you questioning lifelong assumptions. It’s a great story about not getting comfortable doing everything someone else’s way. The idea is to be not just different and creative but flexible, malleable, open to change. That’s what makes cuisine so beautiful – there are no rules. Anyone who tells you otherwise is either asleep at the wheel or a liar.

Charlie Trotter was such an iconoclast. He kicked the door in on the steak-and-pizza-laden Chicago scene with his European approach to foods that paired well with wine, and he meticulously prepared and presented it all with an attitude of Asian minimalism, even though neither Europe nor Asia was identifiable in his menus. Whatever anyone decided had to be the status quo, you can bet your ass that Charlie was going to do the opposite. Before Charlie, I’m pretty sure Chicago had never seen courses consisting of, say, unagi terrine with ruby red grapefruit and grilled duck heart, followed by bobwhite quail in a coriander crust served with chicken liver and watermelon radish, and a sea urchin ice cream with white chocolate and guava for dessert. All paired with a vintage Dom Pérignon.

2. Don’t hold hands, hand off tools

Charlie would gently encourage you, but his approach wasn’t like, “It’s my responsibility to make sure Curtis isn’t being complacent. I must motivate him to be creative!” He believed his job was to provide the tools to help a chef find their own way. Truth is, like anything great in life, no one can do it for you.

I’ve carried that vibe forward into my own career: As part of our hiring process, we bring people in for a stage to see which are motivated. You give them one task to see how they do certain things. When they’re done, are they looking to move on to the next one or are they standing there waiting for somebody to give them something else to do? People who always ask, “What’s next?” are the ones who’re going to push hard all day long, tackle a list 50 things deep and cut it down to zero. Get as many of those employees as you can.

Did any of my ideas ever make it onto the menu at Charlie Trotter’s? Maybe one. I remember a scallop and caviar dish that Matthias Merges, the chef de cuisine, and I created. It was very simple but good.

It wasn’t my job to be creating at Charlie Trotter’s. My main responsibility was to make sure that the food I cooked was the absolute best every single time each night – and if I could make it better the next night, that’s what I’d do.

3. Excellence, from here to eternity

The most important message I absorbed at Charlie Trotter’s was the aforementioned credo: Pursue excellence every day. And that came from Charlie himself. Most of us found the experience gratifying and life-changing. When I think of the people I met during my Trotter days, I’m amazed by how many went on to become culinary superstars.

Look at Matthias Merges: He has opened several restaurants, beginning with Yusho and A10. Graham Elliot has become popular in the food TV world, serving as a judge on *MasterChef* and *Top Chef*, and has owned acclaimed restaurants. Then there’s the late Homaro “Omar” Cantu, who helmed Moto. Giuseppe Tentori had GT Prime and GT Fish & Oyster. David LeFevre now has multiple restaurants in L.A., all very successful. You can’t forget Grant Achatz of Alinea; he was at Charlie Trotter’s a few years before I was.

Charlie inspired me to aspire to become the best, and he gave me the confidence. He did this by investing in the best of everything so that his staff could perform at the highest level. He believed that to succeed you had to be surrounded by the finest people, the finest equipment, and the finest ingredients in the world.

Above all, you need staff to buy into Mission: Excellence. Staff who buy in possess the highest respect for the restaurant. They have a stake in it. They are proud and take it seriously. And you can taste that in the food.

CHARLIE COULD BE A REAL HOTHEAD. He was a man who supposedly throttled Graham Elliot in front of the kitchen staff. My old pal Omar Cantu told me that he was there with Graham when it happened. Omar and Elliot were joking in the kitchen, and Charlie didn’t like that, so he walked up to Graham, put his hands around Graham’s neck in a mock stranglehold. “Don’t you know that I will fucking kill you right now?”

Charlie would get salty when any of his employees left. His attitude was, “Fuck you. Don’t bother putting a notice in. You already decided that you’re done, so just cut the shit and go.”

When I accepted a job in 2003 as a pastry chef for Grant Achatz, who was then at Trio in Evanston, I wanted Charlie to know first. For a while, it felt like he was dodging me, like he sensed my exit was imminent. I finally caught up with him as I swept the hallway between the restaurant and the chef’s office. He was running past, and I said, “Chef, I need five minutes with you.” Anytime you tell the chef that, he knows what you’re going to say next. I had to say it anyway: “You know, Chef, it’s been an incredible experience here, but ... I feel that it’s time to move on.”

“OK, Duffy. You want to go now? That’s fine. Go get changed out of your uniform.”

“No, I want to give you plenty of time and notice. A month.” For a cook, two weeks’ notice is fine. But out of respect, I wanted to give him more time to fill my position.

“I don’t need that. You’re welcome to stay, but I don’t really need it.”

I ended up staying and worked my ass off. Today, I always tell my cooks when they leave, “It doesn’t matter if you spent 10 years or four months here – the last two weeks of your time are what will be remembered. So kill it. Outwork everybody.”

Soon after I left, Charlie was served with a massive class-action lawsuit, which was big news in Chicago and the culinary world. Though I don’t remember signing anything to be a part of it, my name was somehow on the plaintiffs’ list, which incited Charlie’s fury. It inflicted a permanent strain on our relationship.

The chef who filed the suit was Beverly Kim. The complaint said that back-of-the-house employees were expected to work 12-to-14-hour shifts, six days a week, without overtime pay. Someone else from the front-of-the-house staff also filed a class action over tip distribution. The two lawsuits hit Trotter like a one-two punch.

In my mind, if you’re at the restaurant, you’re there, period. No matter what. Don’t bitch. You know what you’re getting into, and OT is a given. Everybody worked for shift pay back then. You didn’t clock in; you didn’t clock out. You showed up, you got paid a certain amount of money: $60 a day. Granted, it should be called *shit* pay, not shift pay. But Charlie was up front about the deal when you started: If you don’t like it, don’t work here.

PHOTOGRAPH: ALEX GARCIA/*CHICAGO TRIBUNE*

Charlie would get salty when an employee left. His attitude was, “Don’t bother putting a notice in.”

One day I got a check in the mail from the settlement. When I saw it, I didn’t ask any questions: When you’re making 16 grand a year and suddenly get a check in the mail for $17,000, guess what? You’re gonna cash it.

I used the money to educate myself. I bought books and read. My wife and I traveled to Paris for two weeks and then Spain for another two, all so I could learn more about – and dine at – legendary restaurants I had only dreamed of experiencing, where my food gods dwelled. I learned so much, and I never would’ve been able to do it without that check.

And Charlie Trotter? He was understandably pissed and bitter.

In *For Grace*, the documentary about the creation of my first restaurant, there’s a tense scene with me, Michael Muser – my partner at Grace and then at Ever – and Charlie at the front door of Trotter’s. Some months after Charlie announced in 2012 that he’d be closing his restaurant after 25 years, Michael and I thought we’d go there one last time and bring the camera crew along to capture what we thought would be a special moment. I’d been to Charlie Trotter’s many times after I’d left and Charlie had always welcomed me back – even after the 2003 lawsuit. Charlie was always cordial. He’d say, “Hey, Chef, how are you? Nice to see you.”

So imagine my surprise when Charlie tore into me and refused to allow me inside. The camera crew filmed this along with him cussing me out about joining the class-action lawsuit and taking a check for $50,000.

I never received $50,000.

I don’t know if it was the camera crew or if Charlie was maybe feeling extra fuck-it amid his swan song. Whatever his reason, if his intention was to wound me, he succeeded: I was hurt and super embarrassed.

I wish we could’ve mended that fence because Charlie was a huge inspiration to me. Sadly, it wasn’t long after that nasty encounter that Charlie died. He was 54.

Excerpted with permission from Fireproof: Memoir of a Chef, *to be published August 5 by Dead Sky Publishing. © 2025 Curtis Duffy*

The Age of Klaus Mäkelä

NOT EVEN 30, THE FINNISH CONDUCTOR IS ALREADY THE BUZZIEST NAME IN CLASSICAL MUSIC. NOW HE'S SET TO USHER IN A NEW ERA AT THE HELM OF THE CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA.

BY NICHOLAS CANNARIATO

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KEVIN SERNA

As I walked through the doors of Orchestra Hall, I felt a gust of something new.

It was a Wednesday in April, and I was attending a rehearsal of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. There was a brightness in the room, a sense of fertile anticipation among the musicians onstage and the smattering of people out in the seats. As the orchestra warmed up, everything was swirling winds and slicing strings and burbling brass, a bracing, crisscrossing cacophony. Then a hush, and out from the stage door emerged Klaus Mäkelä.

He ascended the podium, standing with the excellent posture of youth. Full of lithe energy, he offered a few brief, happy hellos and leaped right into conducting sections of Gustav Mahler's massive Third Symphony, the longest in the standard repertoire of orchestral music.

Mäkelä has been generating all kinds of vibrato in the classical music world since he burst onto the scene. Only 29, the Finland native has already commanded some of the world's most prestigious podiums: He is the chief conductor of the Oslo Philharmonic and music director of the Orchestre de Paris, not to mention his guest-conducting stints in London, Berlin, and Vienna. His ascent has been dizzying even by wunderkind standards. You could argue there hasn't been a conducting phenomenon like this since Leonard Bernstein.

[redacted]

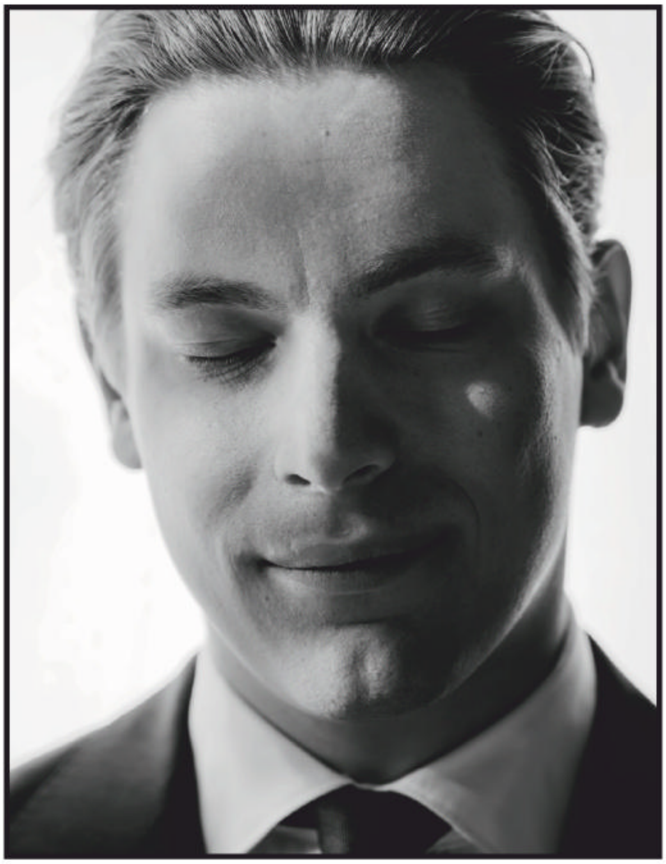
Now Mäkelämania has come to Chicago. Last year, in April, the CSO named him its music director designate, replacing Riccardo Muti, who stepped down two years ago, with a conductor who was only 12 when Muti was appointed in 2008. Though Mäkelä doesn't officially begin his tenure until 2027 – he has commitments with Oslo and Paris until then – he has already been making limited appearances here, which is why he was in town for a roughly two-week stretch of performances this spring. He will be back in October to conduct an all-Berlioz program, with the viola-driven *Harold in Italy* and the composer's most famous work, *Symphonie Fantastique*.

Once Mäkelä, whose initial contract is for five years, takes over, it could mark the start of an era of unprecedented podium prowess, even for the CSO, which has boasted such vaunted music directors as Fritz Reiner, Georg Solti, Daniel Barenboim, and, of course, Muti.

That he'll be splitting his time between Chicago and Amsterdam, where he'll be simultaneously heading the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, has raised eyebrows. But there's little doubt that in Mäkelä, the CSO is getting a bona fide superstar. And for him, helming one of the world's great ensembles (two, in fact) gives him another opportunity to show he's worthy of the hype that has accompanied his rapid rise. "This is a really absolutely brilliant place to make music and make art because it's a city that has such incredibly strong roots in history, tradition," Mäkelä told me.

Given his youth and freshness, Mäkelä is something of an enigma. And that seems to suit him just fine. Of conducting, he told me: “I paint with other people's imagination.”

The music director's suite at Symphony Center consists of both a traditional office with a computer and desk and an intimate room with plush charcoal-gray couches and a piano. It was in that second room that I met with Mäkelä. This was a Sunday afternoon, just a few days after I'd watched him rehearse and then, the next night, perform Mahler's Third Symphony in concert.



Wearing a narrow-fitting black sweater and slacks, his (admittedly great) hair center-parted and tastefully coiffed, he alternated between sitting back and leaning forward, as if to pace his own thoughts about his musical past, present, and future. He had a friendly warmth to him but also a seriousness that conveyed absolute confidence in his ability to lead two world-class orchestras at such a young age; he'll be 31 when he officially takes the reins.

Conducting at the highest level, Mäkelä told me, requires the ability to unite musicians while also challenging them. “When one plays an instrument, a cello or a violin, you decide on all the aspects of the sound. You remember how you vibrate and where you put the finger and how loud you play – everything *you* decide. As a conductor, the *orchestra* is your instrument.”

Born in Helsinki, the son of a cellist and a pianist, Mäkelä trained as a cellist himself but even as a young boy knew he wanted to make music from the podium. The seed was planted when he was 7: While performing with a children's choir in a production of *Carmen*, he grew so fascinated with the conductor's role that he tried to imitate it at home.

When he was 12, he started studying conducting with Jorma Panula at the prestigious Sibelius Academy in Helsinki. Panula taught many of the most famous Finnish conductors working today: Esa-Pekka Salonen, Susanna Mälkki, Sakari Oramo, Mikko Franck. “He was brilliant,” Mäkelä said of his mentor. “His philosophy was that less is more, and a conductor should help but not disturb.” Panula was remarkable, he added, in that “he didn't really teach us anything concrete, so we would never learn how to do 1, 2, 3, 4 or 1, 2, 3” – beat time – “none of that.”

Instead, he taught an approach that was minimally interventionist, hewing toward fixing only what needs fixing. And he was hardly dictatorial with his instruction,

Though he trained as a cellist, Mäkelä (pictured with John Sharp, principal cello for the CSO) set his sights on conducting when he was a boy.

preferring his pupils figure things out for themselves. Recalled Mäkelä: "If it didn't work, he said, 'Well, try something else.'"

At just 21, three years after leaving Sibelius, Mäkelä was named principal guest conductor of the well-regarded Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra. Less than a year later, in 2018, he was appointed chief conductor designate of the Oslo Philharmonic. By the time he took over in 2020, he was garnering accolades from across the classical music world for his way with late Romantic and early modern music.

Other successes soon followed: In 2021, he started as music director of the Orchestre de Paris and became only the third conductor ever – after Georg Solti in 1948 and Riccardo Chailly in 1978 – to sign an exclusive recording contract with Decca Classics, an almost century-old premier classical label. In 2022, he was named chief conductor designate of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, which he'll take over in 2027, the same year he'll officially start here in Chicago.

Arguably no other conductor has ever risen this far this fast. So when the CSO announced in 2024 that Mäkelä would be its new music director, it was as big a get as there is in classical music. Still, it hadn't been a foregone conclusion that he'd land the job: The orchestra's search committee considered other candidates, taking into account the opinions of musicians through one-on-one consultations and weekly surveys about guest conductors.

So how did the CSO settle on Mäkelä? "Each person would tell you a different story in terms of why and how we got there," says John Hagstrom, the orchestra's second trumpet, who was not on the search committee. "In the end, what everyone – or *most* people – certainly had was the same intuition, the same gut instinct, that this is a good place to get to, this is the place we want to get to again, and here's a person who can get us there."

Some years after the committee formed, it surveyed the full orchestra about who should be the next music director. Recalls Jeff Alexander, the president of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association, which administers the CSO: "The overwhelming response was Klaus Mäkelä."

But even before that survey, Alexander had a strong feeling that Mäkelä was the person for the job. His aha moment came in April 2022,

PHOTOGRAPHY: *THIS PAGE AND NEXT SPREAD* TODD ROSENBERG

after the conductor's first rehearsal with the orchestra, ahead of his guest debut performance of Stravinsky's *The Firebird.* "I tried to go backstage to talk to him just to see how he felt it went," Alexander recalls. "And I had trouble getting to his room because I was being stopped in the hallway by any number of musicians saying, 'This is the guy.' "

Those early rehearsals also left an impression on William Buchman, the CSO's assistant principal bassoonist. "Generally, when this orchestra sees a young person standing on the podium in front of them, they will tend to treat them with a bit of suspicion. Who's this young person to tell me how to play this piece that I've been playing since before their parents were in diapers?" Buchman says. But this was different: "Klaus got up on the podium and greeted the orchestra very briefly, said it was a real honor for him to be there, and just started right in: lifted his baton and conducted us on a read-through of the entire piece." Mäkelä did not rely on flattery to show his respect for the musicians, Buchman says: "He trusted us enough to lead us through the entire piece without saying anything about it – just communicating with his baton."

Then there was the naturalness with which Mäkelä meshed with orchestra members outside the concert hall, including at a dinner the young conductor had with Buchman and the five other CSO musicians on the search committee. "He was just so comfortable, not trying to put on airs, not trying to withhold anything, talking not only about music but about art and culture and a little bit of politics and also not being shy about enjoying his meal in front of everybody else," Buchman says. "Some people can be kind of reluctant to do that when they're in a situation where they feel like they're being evaluated."

Still, CSO trombonist Michael Mulcahy, who was also on the search committee, was not taking any chances: He did some independent research. "I have a very good friend who is an associate concertmaster in Oslo, and I said, 'You need to be brutally honest with me: Tell me about Klaus,' and he said, 'Well, I've known Klaus since he was kind of a teenager. This guy is the real deal.' "

The CSO Association president had his aha moment after Mäkelä's first rehearsal before his guest debut. "I was being stopped in the hallway by any number of musicians saying, 'This is the guy.' "

[redacted]

Before April, I'd seen Mäkelä perform only once, in 2023, when he conducted Mahler's Fifth Symphony with the CSO. It was his second appearance on that podium, after the 2022 Stravinsky engagement. The Mahler concert was one of the most agile and emotionally engaged performances of that work I've ever heard, live or recorded – including from some of the greats, like Bernstein, Claudio Abbado, Simon Rattle, and Michael Gielen. I can still recall its extraordinary sound, especially the aching beauty of the Adagietto movement. The strings wafted up, rounded and lightly lush, hovering with a misty, crazy-making ardor. Throughout it all, it felt like the audience was holding its collective breath. It was one of those rare moments where you become acutely aware of what you've always known about music: that it's a thing you hear, a thing you feel, but can never quite reach.

That was the Chicago Symphony Orchestra under – and floating above – the baton of Klaus Mäkelä. When the music rises as it did that night and becomes something profound, something real remains long after the hall has faded back to silence. It has to do with how musicians get along, how they connect to each other and to the audience. For a conductor, that can mean having soft skills like emotional intelligence as much as it can be about having a vision.

Alexander Hanna, the CSO's principal bass, tells me that Mäkelä's way of running rehearsals is possibly the most efficient he's ever experienced: "A two-and-a-half-hour rehearsal goes by in what feels like 30 minutes. We accomplish so much in such a short amount of time that it makes work feel almost like a performance." Mäkelä, says Hanna, "brings a wisdom and a feeling to the music that is well, well beyond his years."

During the rehearsal I sat in on, I noticed how Mäkelä alternated between relaxed and pulsing energy, as he had during our interview. Sometimes he elegantly swayed; other times he leaned forward or sprang up straight like a toy soldier standing at attention. In the music's most intense

Mäkelä, says one CSO member, "brings a wisdom and a feeling to the music that is well, well beyond his years."

phases, he appeared composed but deeply expressive, with emphatic hand-waving and hypnotic arm movements. "Klaus has the ability to articulate what he wants," Hagstrom says, "but he's also sending us a lot of information visually as another layer of instruction, which is a double dose of efficiency."

At one point, leaning on the railing of the podium, one leg hanging lightly in the air, Mäkelä talked to the orchestra about how the music must "flow." I watched his foot dangle ever so precariously. The music must flow. I noticed later that he used the same word when talking with me about Mozart: "The music is somewhere, completely in a different sphere. It flows in a way that I believe no other music flows."

When Mihaela Ionescu, a CSO violinist, and her colleagues first worked with Mäkelä, they were stunned by his maturity: "We were sort of in shock. We had not had this kind of sincere, elegant, expert, mature approach from such a young person, and we didn't even know, particularly, it could be possible." Part of what she appreciates about Mäkelä stems from what his mentor, Panula, instilled in him, that a conductor should help but not disturb. Ionescu describes Mäkelä as "a kind of painter": "He corrects colors, and he enriches here and there."

Whatever your preferred metaphor, that Mäkelä is a brilliant artist is not in dispute. But watching him in action, I noticed that he was also an effective manager of people. When the rehearsal came to a close with the luminous, heaven-hushed Adagio movement of Mahler's Third

Symphony, some of the most exquisitely beautiful of the composer's music, Mäkelä paused the orchestra. Holding his arms close to his chest, he spoke imploringly and deliberately of how this is lofty, heavenly music, and that it must be handled as such.

"Just play," he told the orchestra. "Don't do anything."

His talent as a conductor doesn't translate so easily into terms critics enjoy, such as "interpretive voice." Rather, his is a management style predicated on trust and communication and mutual respect – and the music flows in part from that. Mäkelä, says trombonist Mulcahy, "knows that the orchestra is very reliable, and so he is looking at how the music could affect the playing of the players, where the music actually emotionally moves them in that moment to do something special."

When I asked Mäkelä about this, he compared conducting to managing a business: "If you run a company, if you just do exactly how you want and you don't listen to any other people, then the result can't be very good. After all, I work with the hundred best people in the country, or quite possibly in the world, so it's clever to listen."

I was curious, apprehensive even, to see if the cohesion achieved in rehearsal would survive the rigorous demands of performing Mahler 3 in concert.

With a children's chorus, a women's chorus, and around a hundred musicians arrayed in front of him, Mäkelä took the podium that next night for more than 90 minutes of music that began with the epic first movement, where, as Mahler once noted, "Pan awakes" and "summer comes marching in." The lilting second movement was so sonically aromatic I could have sneezed. By the time the orchestra reached the finale – transcendent music that descends, then ascends, with you wrapped, or perhaps rapt, in it – I couldn't quite believe how much the players seemed to heed Mäkelä's paradoxical direction: *Just play. Don't do anything.*

a few days later, I was back at Symphony Center to watch Mäkelä lead a reading of Dvořák's Seventh Symphony, this time with the Civic Orchestra of Chicago. This training group is composed of young professional musicians supported by the CSO's Negaunee Music Institute. But Mäkelä's approach was nonetheless similar to the one he took with the chief orchestra: Rather than bending the players to his will, he attempted to draw them into a concord of musical purpose. It is a sharp contrast to the more severe but indisputably great conductors common in the mid-20th century, such as, say, Fritz Reiner in Chicago or George Szell in Cleveland or Herbert von Karajan in Berlin.

"There's no real accounting for how he is able to be in such a position of authority [at such a young age]," Mulcahy says. "But what it comes down to is he knows the music he conducts intimately, he has a very precise idea of exactly what the composer has written, and, importantly, he has an incredibly strong conviction about how he understands that music to go."

When I interviewed Mäkelä, it was not hard to see how the young conductor has won over the veteran CSO musicians. The way he looks at you, the way he makes eye contact, feels imploring and urgent but in a friendly if-you-please kind of way. I have no doubt that if he wanted to start a cult, he could.

He's quite charming, after all. When he contrasted his rigorous yet efficient rehearsal schedule in Chicago with the approach at his current directorship in France, he did so with a humorous jab, delivered lovingly: "In Paris, we rehearse two days [a week] from 10 to 5, although with a two-hour lunch break. They insist on that because you need to be able to have three courses and a glass of wine. But that's a different thing."

When I asked if he saw himself as something other than a conductor on the podium – a teacher or a partner, maybe – he described his role as more of an attentive "tour guide." In other words, he sees himself as a consensus maker, there to keep the group focused rather than to push his personal vision at all costs. And that means finding times to demonstrate humility. "I wish to have those moments every week," he told me. "All that interaction is needed in order to make [the music] even better." I could see it in his sidebars with various musicians during rehearsal, when he listened as much as he spoke.

Which isn't to say Mäkelä won't intervene in shaping the sound of the CSO, as is his prerogative. But he's well aware of the orchestra's rich heritage. I asked him if he could still hear echoes of past Chicago music directors like Reiner or Solti or Barenboim. He said he could: "I think it's the beauty of the tradition in an orchestra, because every musician is replaced one at a time, so the new one brings something new but adapts." The key, he argues, is to preserve an orchestra's distinct sound while still being flexible with it. "I suppose that's the thing. It's a little bit like with all the great chefs in the way you can't present the same menu all the time, but you still have those dishes which are yours."

As Mäkelä talked about the CSO's tradition and the music directors who have come before him (he is only the 11th in the orchestra's 134 years), it reminded me of a conversation I'd had recently with former *Tribune* classical music critic John von Rhein about where Mäkelä fits in that pantheon. "My God," he said, "the orchestra takes to him in quite a remarkable way. I can think of a young man like Lenny Bernstein, who was about the same age as Mäkelä when he made his unscheduled debut as a sub for Bruno Walter with the New York Philharmonic." My eyes widened at the comparison.

Still, Mäkelä is not without his shortcomings. Von Rhein feels that at times the young conductor can get bogged down in the details in his pursuit of precise rhythm and textural clarity. But he added: "I can't think of another conductor who has made such an instant impression not only with his vitality on the podium but his musical insight and his way of galvanizing an orchestra."

Given his international conducting schedule, with two major orchestral leadership positions now and two new ones to replace those on the horizon, it's fair to wonder how Mäkelä will juggle everything. After all, being a music director isn't just about conducting; it's also about programming, community engagement, and observing auditions, among other things. But Mäkelä is confident he can handle the duties. He's bullish about promoting community engagement here, he told me, though he didn't offer many specifics.

Conductor itinerancy is a concern of some classical music critics, the most prominent being Alex Ross of *The New Yorker*. Writing about Mäkelä, Ross has argued that nobody needs brilliant globetrotting conductors who are enterprises unto themselves. Ideally, he says, a young conductor's priority should be to stay in one place for a while, building a connection with an orchestra and its city and working their way up.

Mäkelä describes his role as an attentive "tour guide." He sees himself as a consensus maker, there to keep the group focused rather than to push his personal vision at all costs.

[redacted]

If anyone at the CSO shares those concerns, I haven't heard them. Alexander, the CSOA president, points out that Mäkelä's contract will require him to spend 14 weeks a year with the orchestra – the same agreement it had with Muti. He anticipates Mäkelä's time commitment to Amsterdam will likely be similar. "Knowing him as I do, there's no doubt at all that he can handle it," Alexander says.

Hanna, the principal bass, even casts Mäkelä's double duties as an advantage: "I think it's incredible that we're going to have a music director who is hearing two of the world's greatest orchestras, sometimes back to back."

Mäkelä acknowledged to me that leading both orchestras means learning how to negotiate "two completely different societies, two completely different cities," not to mention two "totally different" ways of playing, but he said it in a way that makes you think he's embracing the challenge. The dual roles, he believes, will make him a better conductor by forcing him to be nimble.

It's an appealing way to view his busy future. One hopes the negotiation goes smoothly and neither orchestra feels like the lesser priority. Mäkelä, to his credit, evinces a real fondness for Chicago, seeing his role as threading the CSO's music into the city's cultural tapestry. "If you think about the architecture, when you take a glance at, let's say, Michigan Avenue, it's incredible, the layers of it," he told me. "One glance is the same as a great concert program."

When it came time for me to attend the second and final program of his spring visit here, I was still thinking about the monumentality of the Mahler performance the week before. This night's concert was more traditionally Romantic, with Brahms and Dvořák (and a little Boulez for modernist measure), yet it was no less compelling. In the Dvořák, Mäkelä brought much in the way of fire and lyricism, in balance between richness and fineness of texture. The Adagio movement was the poetry of the piece, deeply affecting in its nobility and grace, while the final two movements blazed with a dancing, withering heat and heart-sputtering fervor, all the way to the rousing, self-immolating end. Standing up during the raucous applause, I was sure I'd witnessed something of lasting power.

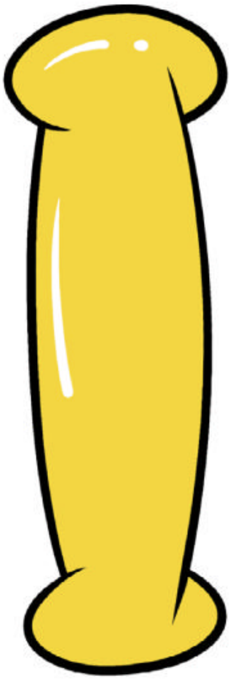
Over many weeks of interviews, rehearsals, and concerts, I learned that the Mäkelä phenomenon is, like music itself, both explainable and not. The music I heard Mäkelä make with the CSO had an eternal kind of feeling, something I've experienced only a handful of times in live performance. It was hard not to feel fervent anticipation for what is likely to be some of the greatest music in the world happening right here in the coming years. Perhaps even music from a different sphere. What that means remains to be seen – and heard. ■

THE CASE FOR REVIEWING WHILE HIGH

CHICAGO'S DINING CRITIC EXPLAINS WHY CANNABIS MAKES HIM BETTER AT HIS JOB.

BY JOHN KESSLER

ILLUSTRATIONS BY RYAN SNOOK



I was in the middle of reviewing a three-hour tasting menu when a course arrived that featured house-cultured buttermilk made with cream from Kilgus Farmstead, a local dairy with cachet. It was … vile. Nothing like the good buttermilk I know, which is sweet and grassy and brightly acidic in a way that balances the funk of fermentation. This tasted more like that pint of forgotten half-and-half you dig out of the fridge, sniff, sip-test, and think, Oh God, a mouse died in this.

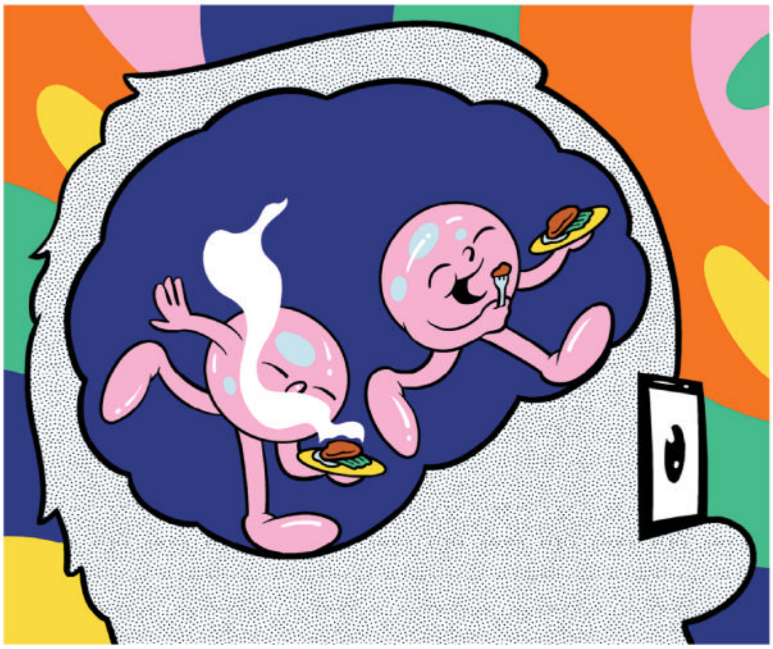
I began to consider the chemistry of cultured dairy. Lactobacillus: That's a good kind of bacteria, right? Surely the chef at this lofty restaurant, Feld, purposefully introduced it, perhaps from a freeze-dried starter culture or an earlier batch. So what went wrong? Did some ambient "bad" microorganism find its breeding ground while the milk sat out overnight? Was it stored in the cooler next to some stinky cheeses? What else was in the fridge? Fish? And why was I getting so lost in thought?

Oh right, I was high.

About an hour before dinner, I had consumed a yuzu-flavored gummy containing five milligrams of a sativa-heavy strain of cannabis. I did this very much on purpose because, after decades of experiencing tetrahydrocannabinol's effects on the act of eating, I know it is about so much more than "the munchies" for me. Sure, THC heightens my appetite enough that I may polish off an unneeded pint of ice cream. But it also makes me acutely aware of smells and flavors. With a little weed in my system, I'm more observant, more open to sensation, and more apt to engage in the dining experience as it's happening rather than jump to conclusions based on preconceptions. I become more discerning.

Which is why I often choose to be under the influence on one of the several visits I make to a restaurant I am reviewing. Although this may strike some as journalistic malpractice, I maintain that it makes me better at my job.

So I wasn't mad at that buttermilk. I was curious about it, just as I was about the artichoke that had been grilled so slowly and with such intention that I could feel the whorl of tender leaves collapsing between my teeth if I bit down slowly. Much thought went into this meal, and while the results weren't always successful, they were worthy of the kind of mindful consideration cannabis allows me to give.



THC ups the sensation of flavors, as a French study suggested. The drug may cause people to eat more, but it will assuredly cause them to *taste* more.

LET ME ASK: How do you describe a dining experience? Perhaps you go down a checklist: The scallops were sweet. The duck sucked. The server was nice enough but never there when you needed them. We all do this, hold our invisible clipboards like we're DMV inspectors taking the restaurant out for a driving test.

When I review a place, I like to toss the notepad aside and take a broader view. I try to put the restaurant in context: the dialogue it engages in with the rest of Chicago, with national dining trends, with the chef's life and work. Yet I also want to feel the specific pleasure of spending these hours of my life at this meal. Even if it's not my scene or my favorite food, I imagine myself as the target guest. If a dopamine hit from the yuzu gummy helps, great.

Additionally, THC affects the brain's olfactory bulb and can significantly increase the perception of smells, as was suggested by a 2014 study of mice at the University of Bordeaux. Because smell and taste are so closely related, THC ups the sensation of flavors. The drug may cause people to eat more, but it will assuredly cause them to *taste* more.

Eiron Cudaback, a neuroscientist who teaches in the cannabis studies program at DePaul University, explained to me how all cannabinoids – both the ones our bodies naturally produce and the ones, like THC and CBD, that we ingest – are lipid molecules that can pass through the blood-brain barrier and affect parts of the brain that induce hedonia (feelings of pleasure) and regulate cognitive function.

But here is where Cudaback draws a distinction that is as fundamental to neuroscience as it is to restaurant reviewing: "Sensation is very different from perception," he says. The drug affects both: the intensity of what you smell and taste as well as the ways your brain chooses to process these stimuli. The associations, the feelings, and the memories that arise in a stoned mind can be different from those conjured by a sober one but are no less valid.

"Is the machinery affected [by the drug], or is it the way you're imagining it?" Cudaback asks, adding, "I would imagine in your line of work what's important is that you can feel [what you're tasting] and relay it to other people." Indeed, half my worth as a writer is in telling readers how food tastes, and the other half is in explaining how it hits. THC helps me draw the distinction.

I surprised myself a year ago when I gave a favorable review to La Serre, a West Loop party box with a selfie station, a ton of fake plants, and a shallow South of French theme. It is a fairly frivolous restaurant, but with the help of half a fast-acting Tangerine Twist gummy, I could join in the ambient good times. I could distract the inner snark monster enough to feel the immersive embrace of this plastic setting and let my eyes jump from the table of three tipsy girlfriends, to the double-daters, to the conference-goers still wearing their name tags and psyched to be in a big city, to the eagle-eyed floor manager whispering in the ear of a waiter.

Most important, I could appreciate the quality of the food and how the cooks in each station – grill, sauté, salad – had hit their marks. I could imagine myself behind the line, knowing to take a lidded pot of mussels off the flame just as the shells were ready to pop open and that the steam would finish the job as they arrived at the table. I could relish the fact that the wine I had asked to be delivered with my entrée appeared precisely on time. It's such a delight when a server gets this one detail right, a virgin glass of cool wine alongside a hot plate of food. Good timing is like music, and dinner is the dance. Stoned revelation, but it's true, right?

Like many users, I find that THC can quell the judgmental or overly rigid thinking patterns to which I'm prone, as well as the grumpiness that sets in with age like wrinkles on the soul. Paradoxically, being less judgy means being more clearheaded and dispassionate, separating feelings and biases from critical observation. This is because THC suppresses the central nervous system, decreasing the release of transmitters that can affect my mood and cloud my perceptions. In other words, it takes the edge off. So when I find a restaurant not worthy of recommending, the slight tweaks to my brain chemistry help me understand with more clarity why.

When I reviewed Kindling Downtown Cookout & Cocktails, a massive two-story restaurant in the Willis Tower, I could've stood stewing in the crowded vestibule while I waited far past our reservation time. Instead, the weed helped me plunge into the front-of-the-house chaos like a mosh pit. I broke away and followed a staffer darting upstairs, seemingly looking for any table that could accommodate us. My review was a fair assessment of this poorly managed aspect, not just a gripe.

I TOKED FOR THE first time with my older brother when I was 11. It made me feel silly, which was and is my preferred state of being. I was young, too young, but it was the '70s. I bought my first baggie at 12. In junior high school, I led a double life, half freak and half geek, with two groups of friends – stoners and mathletes – that I was always terrified would figure out my duplicity. By high school and college, I had found my people among those who tended to smoke more than drink and favored epic living-room bull sessions over loud parties.

As hydroponics and indoor growing systems became more prevalent in my young adulthood in the 1990s, I began to experience weed-induced paranoia and was often wary of taking more than a puff or two. That and several other factors conspired to make me stop: My wife never used it, our inquisitive oldest daughter entered first grade, and we moved from liberal Colorado to conservative Georgia. A good decade or more passed before I came across an Altoids tin containing two joints hidden in my old turntable in the garage and thought, *Huh, I wonder …*

WHERE TO EAT HIGH

For me, the best restaurants to visit under the influence are those that have big flavors and a stranger-in-a-strange-land vibe. Who wants to be my designated driver for these three?

> Restaurant Mehanata

Imagine you've rented a car in Sofia, Bulgaria, driven for an hour, and found yourself in a farmhouse overstuffed with wine barrels and tapestries depicting women in bonnets. Here, people will erupt into line dances, and skewers of shashlik crisscross platters like coats of arms. Order the namesake sach, a clay pan filled with meat, onions, mushrooms, pickles, fries, and gobs of melted cheese. *1141 Lee St., Des Plaines*

> Cariño

In particular: the taco omakase, a 10 p.m. eight-course counter-service meal ($125). An enormous molcajete will appear, and a cook will cast a mesmerizing spell as he grinds a salsa that you will soon spoon over a tortilla cradling a fat slice of wagyu strip loin. Everyone present, you suspect, is high, including the cooks. *4662 N. Broadway, Uptown*

> Void

It will scramble your synapses. Is it a dive bar? Or the place your grandmother took you to when you were a kid because you could have cheese sticks while she drank her Asti Spumante? Or the Wisconsin supper club where relish trays, lasagna, and sweet cocktails somehow all fit together? Yes to each. *2937 N. Milwaukee Ave., Avondale*

The gummy kicked in with the first course.
I had a blast with the high-concept presentations, but many of the flavors felt off to my palate. Sweet potato ice cream had an icy texture that made the caviar on top taste metallic.

(Reader: I got a buzz.) After that, I smoked now and again, yet the strength of modern cannabis made me wary. All those new hybrids produced intense reactions – sometimes euphoria, sometimes debilitating social anxiety.

I was a few-times-a-year user when Illinois legalized recreational cannabis in January 2020, just a couple of months before the pandemic. By the time of shelter-in-place, I had discovered edibles. With the right strain and dosage, I remembered what I had most loved about weed – the pleasure it brought to experience. I cooked elaborate dinners every day, the best I had in years, and I never looked at recipes, just ingredients. I went on long masked walks with no destination in mind and fell in love with the city. After the lockdown was lifted, I began taking gummies to see wide-format movies at the Music Box and hear the CSO perform at Symphony Center. Absolute bliss.

After becoming *Chicago*'s dining critic in 2022, I wrote my first big cover story, on the emergence of high-end sushi restaurants, and one plum assignment was to try the omakase at Kyoten. At nearly $500, this was a meal so expensive that I would have to experience it alone. That seemed like it would be an awkward few hours of pretending to read a book, so I took a gummy.

At one end of the six-seat bar was a local power couple who had asked the chef to hide them behind a kind of privacy screen with their four bottles of grand cru Burgundy. At the other end were a husband and wife about my age with their grown son, who was celebrating his birthday. "He's the foodie," said the mom with a smile, rolling her eyes. I made just enough conversation with the family and chef Otto Phan. I tossed my book and my people-pleasing instincts aside and did what I really wanted to do: just be there in the moment and eat. The wild fish Phan served had flavors that came from the their diet, and their flesh had more tensile strength from swimming in open seas. Could I figure out a way to communicate these observations to readers in a way that sounded appetizing? The weed would help me get there.

I had another extravagant solo meal while high at Esmé a few months after it opened. That whole "edible work of art" concept is no mere metaphor here, since chef Jenner Tomaska collaborates with a local visual artist as he carefully considers everything from the sculptural dishware to the heritage flavors and seasonings. The gummy kicked in with the first course. I had a blast with the high-concept presentations, but many of the flavors felt off to my palate. Sweet potato ice cream had an icy texture that made the caviar on top taste metallic. A patty of minced meat served on a ceramic bone was witty, but its sticky sweet sauce gave me an unfortunate association: It was an haute McRib.

If I hadn't been high would I have been less put off by the flavors?

Not necessarily, because here's the thing: Being high is the litmus test. If I'm feeling more open to pleasure, more forgiving of errors, more engaged with what's around me, and less prone to curdling into peevishiness and the restaurant still doesn't make me care about it, then I have my answer: The meal wasn't good.

When all your neurotransmitters are firing, time tends to slow down as you process the shifting feelings, and that's a good thing in my line of work. It helps me dial into an indelible moment. One sunny day I took a gummy and went for a walk on the 606. On the way home, I passed by Red & White, a Bucktown wine shop and bar, and decided to stop in for a glass. I can't remember what I ordered, other than that it was a light-bodied red from France served chilled. I felt like I could taste the winemaking – the way whole clusters of sun-warm grapes went into a stainless steel tank where wild airborne wild yeast alighted, causing the grapes to swell and pop, releasing so much carbon dioxide into the air you could hear it buzzing if you were there. The winemaker pressed this juicy must to rid it of skins and stems until nothing but a pellucid ruby ferment remained – a simple wine, bottled and shipped all over the world, arriving in Chicago for me to have the privilege of drinking it on this lovely, sun-slanting evening.

Was that the weed talking? Maybe, but that's why I eat and drink, and that's why I write.

HOW TO EAT (AND DRINK) YOUR WAY THROUGH THE SUBURBS

From doughnuts with global flair to refreshing lychee martinis, there's no shortage of bold flavors beyond the city limits. Here are our new favorites.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KIRA CRUGNALE, LENNY GILMORE, NICK MURWAY, AND GARRETT SWEET

AL MAN
TASTE

HIGHWOOD

BEST WAY TO TELEPORT TO MAUI DURING A CHICAGO WINTER

Da Local Boy

When the pandemic hit in 2020, Nate Domingo, born in the Philippines and raised in Maui, lost his job as a chef at a Kaanapali Beach resort and so followed his wife, Diana, to Illinois, where she pursued a graduate degree and he got a job at a Highland Park car wash. His coworkers there told him the Hawaiian food he cooked for them was too good to give away, so he and Diane started a catering business and then a food truck. Last year, riding a wave of word-of-mouth enthusiasm, they opened a restaurant across from the Metra station in Highwood and called it Da Local Boy, in honor of their 7-year-old, Sky, who, Nate says, still has to approve every item before it goes on the menu. Sky has excellent taste. The Hawaiian specialties like huli-huli chicken and pulehu short ribs are better than anything I've eaten in Hawaii and are served authentically: with scoops of white rice and macaroni salad. And yes, the restaurant has great Spam musubi, although if I had to quibble, it is missing the particular tang infused by four hours under a convenience store heat lamp. There's a cooler filled with Hawaiian soft drinks, cheerful servers brimming with aloha, and island music playing at all times. It's easy to imagine you're at a locals' fave in Lahaina – as long as you don't look out the window. *320 Green Bay Rd.* –PETER SAGAL

HIGHLAND PARK

BEST PLACE FOR PRETENDING YOU'RE IN MOSCOW, CIRCA 1995

Yana's Speakeasy

If you engage Russian-born Yana Khernburg in conversation, either inside her restaurant and bar or perhaps outside as she harangues passersby to come in, you might get a breathless monologue like the one I received one night: "I opened my barbershop here in 2020 right as the pandemic started but the shutdown rules allowed barbershops to stay open so my customers would come and just hang out and I started serving them drinks and I figured that would be a nice new business when the space next door became available so I took it over and opened up this place but I wanted it to be special so I made it dark and romantic and put in a hidden door behind a player piano so it feels like a secret and here try the horseradish vodka we infuse it ourselves." Whew. The menu is mostly Eastern European, with borscht, stroganoff, root vegetables, and caviar, of course, plus a remarkable steak seared on a stone in front of you and a cocktail program good enough to risk Eliot Ness raiding the place, were it still Prohibition. The horseradish vodka is excellent. And yes, Yana still cuts hair next door. *465 Roger Williams Ave.* –PETER SAGAL

PHOTOGRAPHY: (DA LOCAL BOY) JOHN E. DIZON; (YANA'S) MURWAY; *PREVIOUS SPREAD* (BELLBIRD, DEERE PARK) CRUGNALE; (ELAWA) GILMORE; (GREGGORY) MISTEY NGUYEN; (COMMON GOOD) SWEET; (PASTRY) COURTESY OF BELLBIRD; (AL MANAKEESH) MURWAY

ELMHURST

BEST GLOBAL TOUR VIA DOUGHNUTS

Sweet Circle

Stepping into this brightly colored place, you might think it's just another neighborhood doughnut shop. But a look inside the display cases tells a different story. Alongside the classic glazed, red velvet, and old-fashioned flavors at this four-year-old spot (originally called Hello Donut), you'll find a rotating selection of inventive international offerings. "We think food should have no boundaries," says partner Bhagyesh Patel, who joined founder-baker Rafael Hernandez to expand the business (a second location just opened in Schererville, Indiana). Hernandez, who has 27 years of baking experience, also tapped some chef friends, including Dudley Nieto of Fat Rosie's, which has several suburban locations, to collaborate on the global options. Here's the skinny on three. *116 N. York St.* –LISA SHAMES

Mole
Nieto helped create this Mexican-influenced raised doughnut, which features cinnamon, notes of guajillo chile, and toasted sesame seeds.

Mango lassi
This ode to the classic Indian drink uses Alphonso mangoes imported from India and a crystallized sugar garnish.

Dubai chocolate
Inspired by the viral Arabic candy bar, this chocolate-glazed bismarck is filled with pistachio cream and shredded phyllo dough and topped with toasted pistachios.

Mil Colibrís

HIGHLAND PARK

BEST NEW BREAKFAST BURRITO

Mil Colibrís Bakery & Café

A few times each week, I jog from my house in Highland Park down to the lake and back up the ravine. It's the bare minimum to stay just this side of dad bod. But these days, I have an additional reason to lace up my Asics, albeit one that is counterproductive to maintaining my physique. In 2023, Mexico City native Daniela Segoviano opened her café along my route, serving up conchas, doughnuts, and other pastry delights. But it's the breakfast burrito that keeps me running back. I'll stagger in – wild-eyed, sweating, and mumbling – and merely extend an index finger toward my beloved, tightly wrapped in foil. The burrito is packed with chorizo, eggs, cheddar cheese, and hash browns, with accompanying sides of sour cream and salsa verde to add an extra bit of richness and tang. (There's also a veggie option.) Do I sometimes get a second one for the next day? Yes, I do. After a workout, there's nothing more important than recovery. *481 Roger Williams Ave.* – GREG TROTTER

GLEN ELLYN

BEST BAR FOR PEOPLE WHO READ THE WHOLE MENU

Common Good Cocktail House

After years of serving city crowds, co-owners Chad and Alicia Hauge and Mike Melazzo – industry vets with stints at Longman & Eagle, Bang Bang Pie & Biscuits, and Mott St. – noticed something: A lot of their regulars were making the trek in from the suburbs. So in 2018, ➡ they opened this bar in Glen Ellyn, where they were raised. With a cocktail list that balances bold, technique-heavy creations with thoughtful riffs on the classics, Common Good, set in a space that gives cozy living room vibes, manages to be both boundary-pushing and deeply comforting. The menu features 30 new drinks each season, with a few crowd-favorite staples like the DTF (Down to Fiesta), a mango-chile-lime stunner. But this isn't just flashy mixology for show – it's meticulous work behind the scenes, from sous-viding citrus to beef-fat-washing bourbon (a process that adds richness and a subtle nutty flavor) for a smoked Manhattan that channels Dr Pepper and Texas barbecue in the best possible way. *560 Crescent Blvd.* – KELLY AIGLON

PHOTOGRAPHY: (MIL COLIBRÍS) COURTESY OF MIL COLIBRÍS; (COMMON GOOD) SWEET; *PREVIOUS SPREAD* CLINT BLOWERS

Explore Middle Eastern Food in the Southwest Suburbs

Shawarma, kebabs, and other delicacies await. **By Titus Ruscitti**

Cook County has the largest Palestinian population in the United States, and Harlem Avenue in Bridgeview is the main hub. There, and in nearby suburbs, you'll find an array of Palestinian, Jordanian, Yemeni, and other Middle Eastern culinary offerings. Here are five dishes to seek out.

CHICKEN SHAWARMA

at Alasala Restaurant

The rotisserie chicken specialist, which has a location in Jordan, features the tallest spits of shawarma in the area. The bird is served Arabic-style, which means that thin strips of freshly sliced, well-spiced chicken are stuffed into lavash with pickles and garlic sauce, then griddled and sliced into bite-sized pieces. *8028 S. Harlem Ave., Bridgeview*

ZA'ATAR WITH CHEESE

at Al Manakeesh

The Halal-certified Palestinian restaurant specializes in Levantine breads. This pizza-like order is a warm, fresh-baked flatbread called manakeesh, topped with an earthy mix of thyme, sesame seeds, and sumac and melted stretchy cheese. *8401 S. Harlem Ave., Bridgeview*

KOFTA KEBAB

at Reef Kabob

Mashawi are Arabic grilled dishes, and our favorites are at this spot, where everything is cooked over a charcoal fire. While all the kebabs here are excellent, I particularly love how the smoke seeps deep into the juicy kofta, a mixture of ground lamb and beef. *7215 W. 103rd St., Palos Hills*

AL MANAKEESH
TASTE OF PALESTINE

KNAFEH WITH ICE CREAM

at Zmzm Sweets

Chicago Ridge is home to the first U.S. location of this Middle Eastern dessert outfit, which is known for its knafeh. This treat is all about textures, with slightly floral layers of shredded phyllo dough filled with sweet cheese. It's served warm and best paired with a scoop of stretchy Arabic ice cream and sprinkled with chopped pistachios. *10511 S. Harlem Ave., Chicago Ridge*

SMOKED BEEF RIBS

at M'daKhan

The restaurant's name translates to "smoked" in Arabic, fitting for a place specializing in Arabic smoked meats. Co-owner Muhammad Baste grew up here, and his menu incorporates both Middle Eastern and American barbecue. The ribs are super tender, and the massive portion comes with fluffy rice or fries. *9115 S. Harlem Ave., Bridgeview*

PHOTOGRAPHY: MURWAY

LA GRANGE

BEST SHORTCUT TO INCREDIBLE PASTRIES

The Bellbird Bakeshop

If you're all for the city's current bakery boom but not so keen on the lines, make tracks for La Grange, where husband-and-wife owners Erik and Maree Hecimovich (who have put in time at Publican Quality Bread, Grace, and Bad Butter) are turning out some of the most beautiful laminated pastries in the suburbs. Offerings shift seasonally, but inspired flavors and technical refinement are constants. Try a beau ideal of a pain suisse filled with lush espresso and malted milk pastry cream or a flaky Danish heaped with caramelized pineapple, toasted coconut, and passion-fruit custard. If savory is more your speed, you might find brioche buns topped with guajillo salsa, jammy eggs, and soyrizo that are almost – *almost!* – too pretty to eat. *15 W. Harris Ave.* –CATE HUGUELET

EVERGREEN PARK

BEST SPOT FOR SLURPING PHO AND SIPPING A FANCY LYCHEE MARTINI

Thithi's

Where I live, on the Far South Side of Chicago, dining out used to mean pizza, fried chicken, or fast food, while drinking destinations were of the beer-only tavern variety. But when this French-accented Vietnamese and Thai restaurant opened in bordering Evergreen Park 10 years ago, it brought upscale dining and a classy martini bar to an area sorely in need of both. Previously, I used to have to drive from Beverly to the West Loop's Saigon Sisters to get my pho fix. No longer: At Thithi's, which also has a Westchester location, I can find a full-bodied chicken one, along with a delicate bouillabaisse and my new favorite, the Luxury Seafood Clay Pot, a simmering, elegant arrangement of sea bass and shellfish in a sweet black pepper sauce that lives up to the dish's haughty name. With the martini offerings (I recommend the lychee one, featuring fresh fruit), this place can turn into quite a scene on Friday and Saturday nights, especially on the patio. And for good reason: There's nothing quite like it around. *9144 S. Kedzie Ave.* –ADRIENNE SAMUELS GIBBS

PHOTOGRAPHY: (BELLBIRD) CRUGNALE; (THITHI'S) SWEET

The Best Japanese Eats Are in the Suburbs

When he's craving curry rice and tonkatsu, our dining critic heads north. **By John Kessler**

Having lived in Japan for a couple of years, I can recognize the two kinds of Japanese restaurants in America. There are those that serve the craveable treats people the world over love – sushi, tempura, ramen – and those that serve the more varied dishes Japanese natives search out for a taste of home. In the Chicago area, the latter exist almost exclusively in the north and northwest suburbs, closer to where many expats live. Here are my three faves.

SCHAUMBURG

TORIZEN

Lunch here is never a bad idea – particularly if you order the crackly Berkshire pork tonkatsu. But at night, you can try all the izakaya dishes you won't find elsewhere. I'm obsessed with the daikon salad topped with crispy whole silverfish, bonito flakes, and nori. *22 E. Golf Rd.*

WILMETTE

TORINO RAMEN

What began as a real-deal Japanese ramen shop has expanded into neighboring storefronts and a broad menu encompassing sushi and small plates like fried tofu in broth and sautéed burdock root. *1162 Wilmette Ave.*

PHOTOGRAPHY: (TORINO) GILMORE; (RAMEN HOUSE) SWEET

Shin-han
Taiwan Curry
Unagi Don
Taiwan Ramen
Gyoza

PALATINE

RAMEN HOUSE SHINCHAN

I've only been to this location (there are also outposts in Glenview and Vernon Hills), and while I dig the Best Condition – yes, that's the name of the Nagoya-style ramen dish filled with roasted garlic cloves and stir-fried veggies – I go mainly for the made-from-scratch curry rice, *so* much better than the packaged versions. *1939 S. Plum Grove Rd.*

LAKE FOREST

BEST FARM-TO-TABLE CAFÉ WHERE YOU CAN PET BABY GOATS

The Café at Elawa Farm

Farm-to-table is nothing new, but at the café at Elawa Farm, a nonprofit foundation, your food doesn't have to travel far to get to your table. Opened last fall and housed in a restored David Adler–designed building, the restaurant serves breakfast and lunch made with ingredients from the property, including vegetables grown 100 feet away, as well as from other local farms. (I ordered the breakfast sandwich: an egg custard patty, bacon, and Wisconsin cheddar on a brioche bun with herb aïoli and tomato jam.) To get the full bucolic experience, sit on the picturesque patio, where you can watch baby goats graze as you eat. (Yes, you can pet them.) The seats are so close to the greenhouse that you can catch a whiff of the fragrant herbs that feature in these dishes. *1401 Middlefork Dr.*

–JENNY HELLWIG

The Great Suburban Migration

Top Chicago chefs have started opening restaurants outside the city. Here are three worth the drive. **By Liz Grossman**

HIGHWOOD

DEERE PARK

Chef: Todd Stein

Chicago cred: Stein has a 30-year culinary history in the metro area, including at the acclaimed MK and Gordon in River North and Formento's in the West Loop. But until recently he had never had his own place.

The move: While Stein was serving as culinary director for Ballyhoo Hospitality, his childhood friend Josh Kaplan approached him about joining forces to reconcept Greenwood, his restaurant in the North Shore suburb of Highwood. In April, they opened Deere Park, a New American brasserie. "Owning a restaurant was something I'd never really done yet," says Stein, who was raised in Highland Park. "To be able to do it across the street from where I grew up was a unique opportunity." Their revamped menu includes lobster dumplings, fennel-crusted roast chicken, and a martini that comes with their favorite childhood snack – a side of chips. *200 Green Bay Rd., Highwood*

Where he eats in the burbs: Stein dined at **EJ's Place** in Skokie almost weekly before opening his spot. "They have great cocktails and the best lamb chops I've ever eaten in my life. They've been doing it quietly for 30 years."

ST. CHARLES

THE GRACEFUL ORDINARY

Chef: Chris Curren

Chicago cred: Curren spent 15 years working at Blue 13, Fulton Market Kitchen, and Seven Lions.

The move: He moved to Elgin in 2014 and later to Hampshire, but didn't bring his work close to home until he and wife, Megan, opened their upscale American spot in 2021. "We knew if we wanted to continue working at the type of restaurants we were used to, we would have to build it ourselves," Megan says. The next project for O&D Hospitality (named after their kids, Oliver and Delilah): Vicolo, which will start serving wood-fired pizzas and housemade pastas in Aurora this fall. *3 E. Main St., St. Charles*

Where he eats in the burbs: When the couple dined at the **Walrus Room**, a modern supper club in Geneva, "we realized we could do our style of food in this area and it would be well received," Chris says. "Laura Bentley and Marshall McCarty are doing incredible things with food and drink, but also crushing service and ambience."

SOUTH BARRINGTON

THE GREGGORY

Chef: José Sosa

Chicago cred: Sosa spent 18 years at Gibsons Restaurant Group, including as executive chef at Gibsons Italia, and in 2023 launched River North's Ummo.

The move: Opening a place in the northwest suburbs represents a homecoming for Sosa: The Michoacán-born chef started as a dishwasher at Rosemont's Rosewood. Earlier this year, he reunited with Gibsons alum Gregg Horan and Rosewood's Bill Veremis to launch the Greggory. "We wanted to open something with great food and service, and do it in the burbs, where there's a need for restaurants not owned by big corporations." The live-fire concept offers rotisserie-roasted prime rib, grilled octopus, and a fire-roasted seafood tower. One bennie for Sosa: the commute. "It's about 35 minutes from where I live in Naperville, but nothing like driving to the city." *100 W. Higgins Rd., South Barrington*

Where he eats in the burbs: At **Petite Vie**, Paul Virant's place in Western Springs, Sosa enjoys the Parisienne gnocchi and duck confit with roasted leeks at the bar. "They serve great food, have great service, and keep the menu fresh."

PHOTOGRAPHY: (STEIN) NEIL BURGER; (CURREN) MATT REEVES; (SOSA) SWEET; *PREVIOUS SPREAD* GILMORE

THE GREGO
Jose Sos

EVANSTON

BEST NEW REASON TO INVITE YOUR BUBBE TO LUNCH

Mensch's Deli

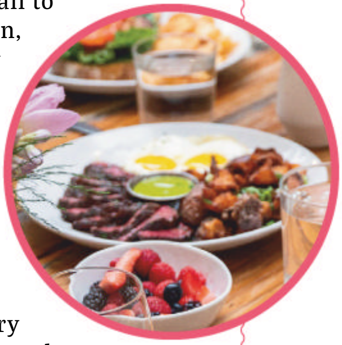
She'll kvell – and so will you. Opened last summer by three New Trier alums who missed the kind of sit-down deli restaurant they grew up with, Mensch's is a tribute to old-school Jewish diners. Jack DeMar, Kiki Eliopoulos, and Eric Kogan visited iconic New York City ones – Russ & Daughters, Barney Greengrass, Pastrami Queen – before crafting a menu rooted in classic techniques and family recipes. The result? Perfectly brined corned beef and pastrami (smoked in-house), matzo brei, decadent babka French toast, and matzo ball soup with serious healing powers. Bagels are brought in from Lincolnwood's New York Bagel & Bialy, and the beef salami from Romanian Kosher Sausage in Rogers Park is a nod to local deli lore. A second location opened in Glencoe in June, which means less schlepping for fans farther north. *1608 Chicago Ave.* –JUDY SUTTON TAYLOR

WINNETKA

BEST BOUGIE CAFÉ THAT'S ALSO BABY FRIENDLY

Towne & Oak

It isn't easy eating out with a little one. When you walk into a nice restaurant with an overstuffed diaper bag, a stroller that resembles a small tank, and a ticking time bomb of a baby, the looks you get from other patrons are enough to dissuade you from ever setting foot in public again. And that's before the eating begins. The ensuing mess is the sort of disaster scene that typically requires the attention of FEMA. Which is all to say that since my daughter was born, my wife and I haven't found many restaurants where we can truly relax and enjoy a nice meal as a family. But Towne & Oak, which opened in 2020, is an exception. The space is bright and airy, with plenty of room for stroller parking. (A necessity in this neighborhood, where strollers are even more common than luxury cars.) The bathrooms are spacious and clean, not least the changing tables. The friendly staff seems genuinely unbothered by the presence of so many kids. And the food – elevated café fare, from the butternut squash tartine ($15) to my go-to choice of steak and eggs (pictured), featuring a generous serving of tender hanger, crispy potatoes, and herb aïoli ($24) – is well worth the North Shore prices. Even my 1-year-old enjoys the eggs enough that she actually eats them rather than fling them to the floor. Now *that*'s an endorsement. *921 Green Bay Rd.* –STANLEY KAY



ORLAND PARK

BEST PLACE TO BRUNCH ON A MONDAY, OR TUESDAY, OR WEDNESDAY ...

The White Sheep

I had driven by the White Sheep at least a hundred times en route to the stores near Orland Square before I finally stopped in. Now? I don't want to brunch anywhere else – especially because this is a rare restaurant that serves brunch not just on weekends but every day. My ideal weekday morning: I drop the kids at school, call up some mom friends, and enjoy the every-day-a-Saturday feel of the place. After scarfing down the All American Hash Bowl, featuring crispy-soft potatoes served in a sizzling mini cast-iron skillet with eggs and Brussels sprouts and accompanied by pancakes so good they barely require syrup, I head to the pastry bar to grab a homemade doughnut. Even if I can't decide between the lavender-blueberry and Ferrero Rocher varieties for a to-go treat, it's easier knowing I don't have to wait a week to return. *14335 LaGrange Rd.* –ADRIENNE SAMUELS GIBBS

PHOTOGRAPHY: (TOWNE & OAK) CRISTINA G PHOTOGRAPHY; (MENSCH'S) MURWAY

SINCE 18
BROWN
THE ORIGINAL
CREAM SODA
FAVORITE FOR GENERA

Corner
ASIAN EATERY

WINNETKA

BEST NEW BANH MI

Corner Banh Mi

Winnetka boasts palatial homes, boutique stores, and pricey coffee, but a bangin' banh mi shop? Just steps from the *Home Alone* house, this Vietnamese-Chinese joint that Kevin Diep opened last year serves up uniformly exceptional sandwiches, though the grilled lemongrass pork number – deeply marinated and delightfully charred – is especially stellar. The crackly-tender bread comes fresh from Nhu Lan Bakery, but everything else, from mayonnaise and pickles to meats, is prepared in-house. *561 Lincoln Ave.* – KEVIN PANG

PHOTOGRAPHY: GILMORE

GLEN ELLYN

BEST AFFORDABLE TASTING MENU

Five O Four Kitchen

It’s impossible not to root for Cristian Orozco, the owner, executive chef, and head rooftop gardener for Five O Four Kitchen. Every night, he offers a create-your-own five-course tasting menu for $85. Whatever you select, you’ll receive a culinary memoir in five acts. Bowls of Worcestershire-spiked ceviche and huitlacoche ravioli are nods to his childhood in Guatemala near the border with Mexico. Then come marigold-showered plates, perhaps wagyu steak and salmon fumet, that reflect his Chicago journey, first as a dishwasher at Pho 777, then as a kitchen worker at Acadia, North Pond, and Tzuco. For months, he commuted from the city to consult at Five O Four, until the previous owners, realizing he loved the place more than they did, sold it to him last year. Now this 13-table treasure is all Orozco’s: a small room with big ambitions, every plate a little history of its own. *504 Crescent Blvd.* –PETER GIANOPULOS

CHICAGO GOURMET

Powered By
Invesco QQQ

STEP UP TO THE PLATE

SEPTEMBER 25-28, 2025

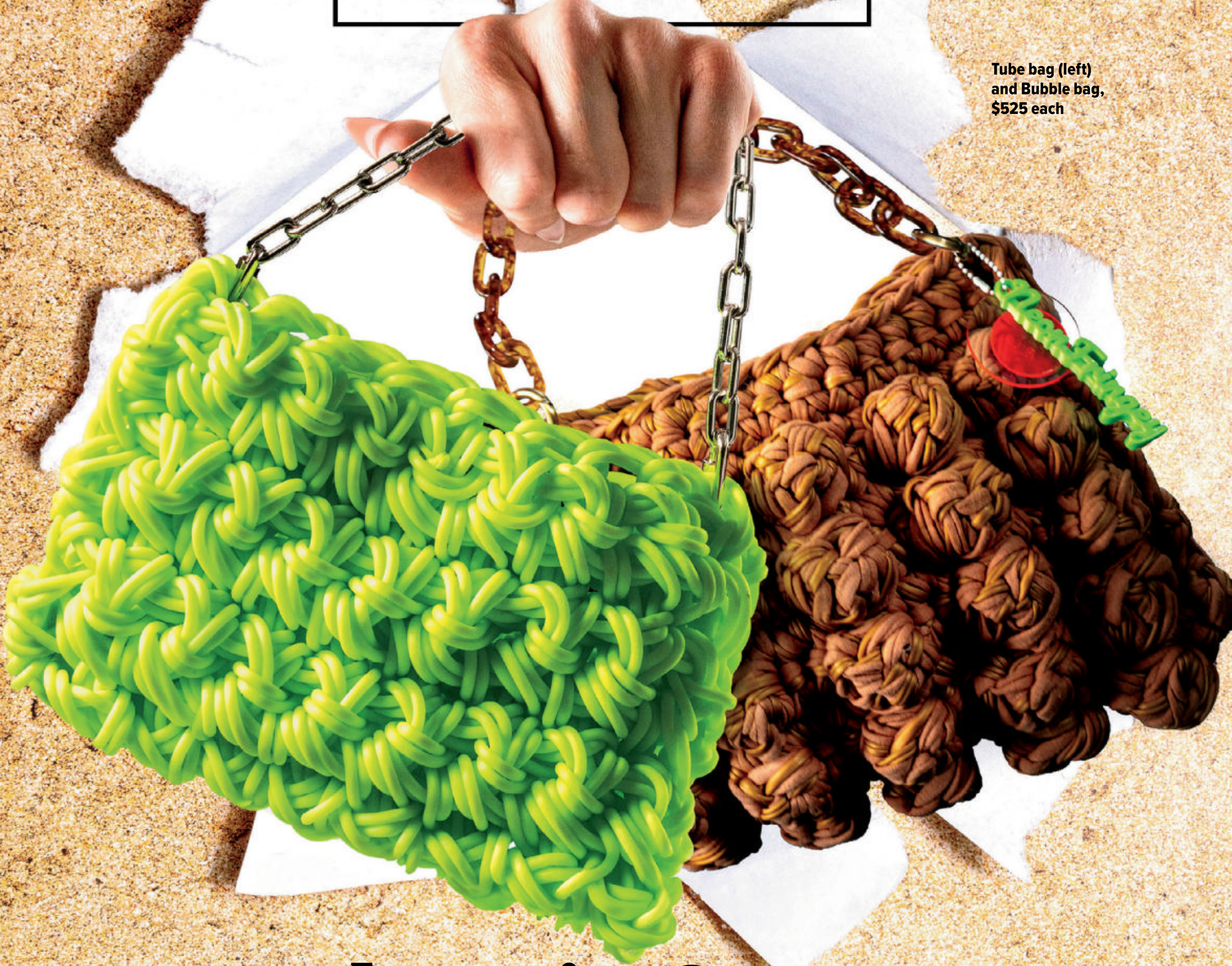
HARRIS THEATER ROOFTOP | MILLENNIUM PARK

TICKETS: CHICAGOGOURMET.ORG

SPONSORS

Invesco QQQ
Illinois Restaurant Association
Southern Glazer's Wine and Spirits
Chicago – Choose Chicago
UHC
Cuervo Tradicional 100% de Agave
DoorDash
Rational
Patrón Tequila
South Walton Florida
S.Pellegrino
Mariano's
Kerrygold
Country Financial
Blue Moon
Home Grown Sysco
American
US Foods
Acqua Panna Toscana
JCDecaux
Performance Foodservice
Pernod Ricard USA Creators of Conviviality
Pepsi
Bank of America
Ecolab
Wagyu Fest
Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority at McCormick Square
OVG Hospitality
Chicago Magazine
Soap.com
TAO Chicago
Turano
Gibsons Restaurant Group
enjoy illinois

FOUND



Tube bag (left) and Bubble bag, $525 each

Electric Cargo

Neon Fringey's locally designed handbags are zapped with '80s flair.

By KELLY AIGLON

■ Some say the '80s are dead. Carrie Meghie's response? *Hold my yarn.* Her new Chicago-based handbag brand, Neon Fringey, is a nod to a childhood steeped in craftsmanship and creativity. Raised learning to knit alongside her mother, Meghie once earned the right to wear a metallic silver bikini only because she made it herself. The former hotel manager and restaurateur turned real estate investor (luxury villas in Jamaica, no less) has channeled her artistry into bags now sold at Felt in Logan Square. Each piece is a carefully considered blend of texture and color, often crafted from fibers Meghie creates herself. And while early designs were heavy on neon, her latest take a more wearable turn: Think neutrals with a flicker of highlighter brights. They're still impossible to ignore—just a little easier to pair with your everyday. *neonfringey.com*

Photograph by DRAKE SWEENEY

SHOP SCOUT

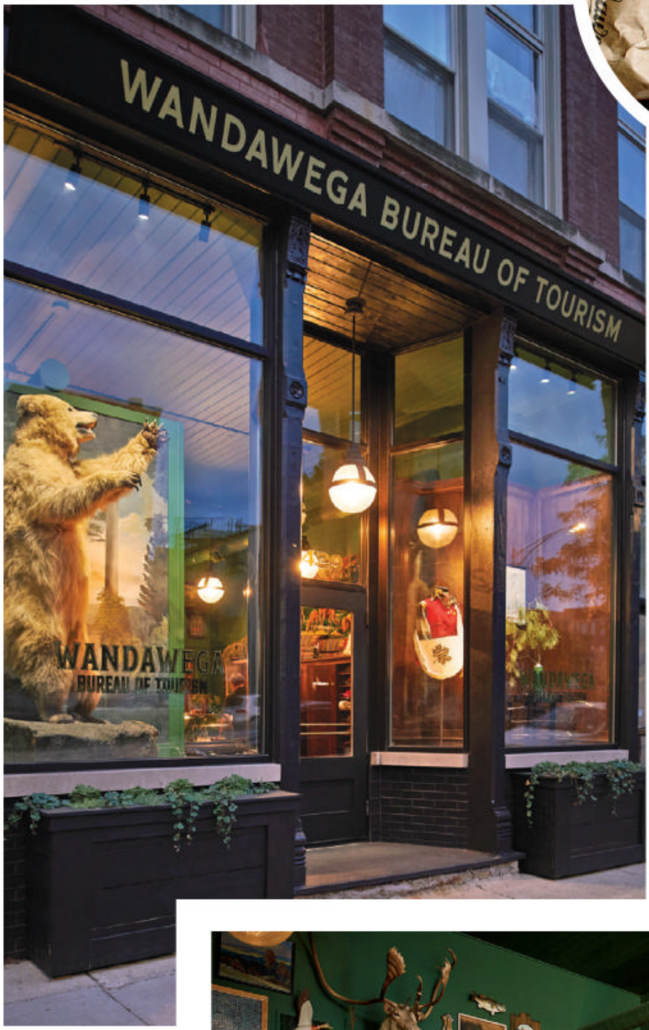
Camp Sights

The folks behind Camp Wandawega have opened a West Town store stocking goods worthy of a merit badge.

By KELLY AIGLON

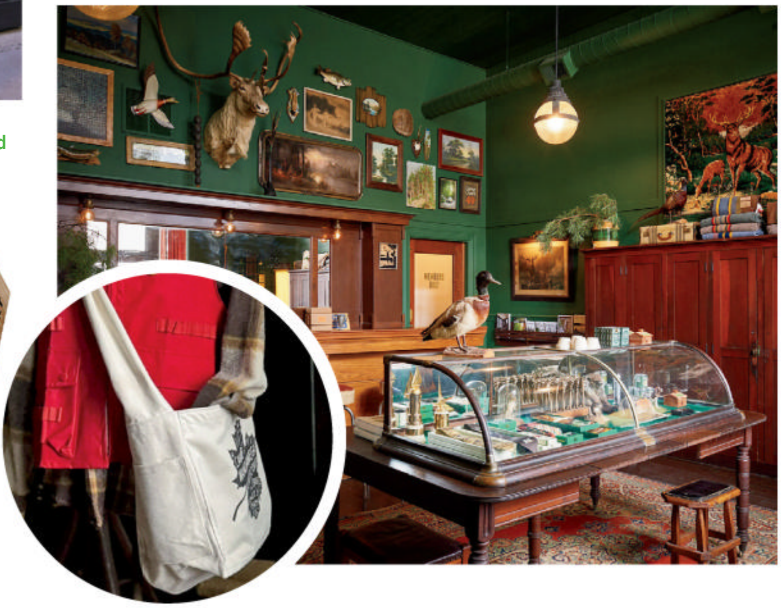
CAMP WANDAWEGA IN Elkhorn, Wisconsin, has long been a destination for Chicagoans looking to embrace the outdoors without roughing it too much (think cute cabins, treehouses, and tents). Now owners Tereasa Surratt and David Hernandez have brought their ethos to Chicago with a store they recently opened at 1429 West Grand Avenue. Wandawega Bureau of Tourism builds on the product lines the couple have been hawking at the campgrounds and online.

WANDAWEGA
100 YEARS OF
AGED 4 YEARS
C.H. DISTILLERS



THE VIBE

Meticulously styled to resemble a Northwoods outpost, with just the right amount of kitsch, the space embodies the campground's bow-and-arrow-hoisting, Hamm's-chugging spirit with a museum-like collection of found objects and taxidermy curated over the years. In the front window: a vintage ethically sourced taxidermy grizzly bear (Surratt drove five hours to Indiana to get it). For nostalgic effect, Surratt and Hernandez had local artist Marina Ross paint a mural of what Camp Wandawega would have looked like in 1925. A backroom with a bar will host workshops and special events.



Below: A 100-year-old cabinet salvaged from a convent

Left: Owners David Hernandez and Tereasa Surratt

DUCK CALL
FOR THE
Wandawega Sportsman
FIELD SPORT

THE MERCH

You'll find the expected—Wandawega-branded camping supplies such as matches, towels, dartboards, and (pictured) duck calls and utility bags—but plenty more. The store will rotate exclusive offerings from the likes of Pendleton and Anthropologie, including heavy-duty blankets and candles. Wandawega has also collaborated with Chicago's CH Distillery to produce a bourbon (upper right) in celebration of the camp's 100th anniversary.

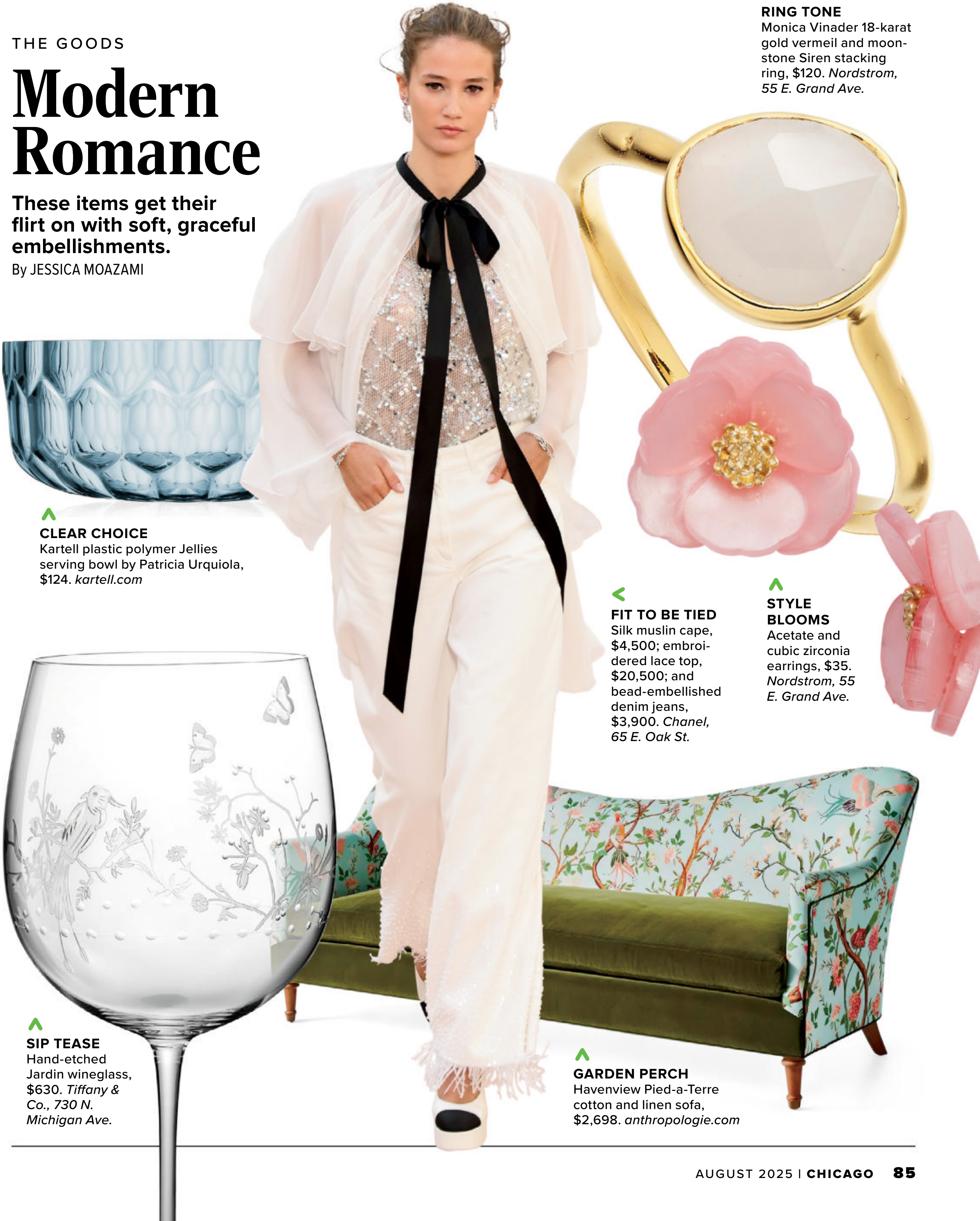
PHOTOGRAPHY: (SURRATT/HERNANDEZ) ANDY BERNDT; (STOREFRONT/INTERIOR) BOB COSCARELLI; (BOURBON) BETTY SHIN BINON; (DUCK CALL) NATHAN BOBEY; (VEST) COURTESY OF THE STORE

THE GOODS

Modern Romance

These items get their flirt on with soft, graceful embellishments.

By JESSICA MOAZAMI



RING TONE
Monica Vinader 18-karat gold vermeil and moonstone Siren stacking ring, $120. *Nordstrom, 55 E. Grand Ave.*

CLEAR CHOICE
Kartell plastic polymer Jellies serving bowl by Patricia Urquiola, $124. *kartell.com*

FIT TO BE TIED
Silk muslin cape, $4,500; embroidered lace top, $20,500; and bead-embellished denim jeans, $3,900. *Chanel, 65 E. Oak St.*

STYLE BLOOMS
Acetate and cubic zirconia earrings, $35. *Nordstrom, 55 E. Grand Ave.*

SIP TEASE
Hand-etched Jardin wineglass, $630. *Tiffany & Co., 730 N. Michigan Ave.*

GARDEN PERCH
Havenview Pied-a-Terre cotton and linen sofa, $2,698. *anthropologie.com*

PHOTOGRAPHY: (CHANEL) GETTY; (ALL OTHERS) COURTESY OF VENDORS

"I didn't know what I needed, but together we figured it out."

If you're living with Alzheimer's or dementia, or care about someone who has been diagnosed, we're only a phone call away. The Alzheimer's Association® 24/7 Helpline is staffed with dementia experts who provide free, confidential information and support that's proven to help. It doesn't need to be a crisis: We're here whenever you want to talk.

One call can make a difference.

24/7 Helpline: 800.272.3900

ALZHEIMER'S® ASSOCIATION

SQUARE FEET

FOR SALE
FOR SALE
OPEN HOUSE

Housing's Split Personality

Even as tight inventory continues to stifle home sales in the Chicago area, the news hasn't been all bad for the real estate agents in our latest rankings.

By LEIGH KUNKEL and MICHELLE DELLINGER

IT'S BEEN A TALE OF TWO housing markets in the Chicago area of late. "Under $1 million, especially for first-time buyers, the market has been on fire. More than likely, you're going to have to pay over asking," says Eugene Fu, an agent with @properties Christie's International Real Estate. But at the upper end, $2 million and above, purchasers are finding more leverage: "That market is softer. Those buyers generally have more choices and room to negotiate."

The biggest driver of this dichotomy? Millennials looking for starter homes. "In any of the neighborhoods that cater to them, we expect really intense competition for a property," says Fu. "But homes around Michigan Avenue that are historically targeted toward empty nesters – those people aren't buying in Chicago right now. They're going straight to Florida or Arizona."

Overall in the area, sales are down, with annual figures dropping 36 percent from 2021 to 2024. Tight inventory continues to be a drag on the market, as potential sellers are reluctant to give up their historically low interest rates. But the competition for what homes *are* available has prices climbing, with the median up 8 percent last year. This has been a commission lifeline for real estate agents, whose sales dollars are creeping back up. In our latest rankings of individual agents (page 88), it took more than $24 million in annual residential sales to crack the top 100; last year, the threshold was just under $20 million. For agent teams (page 90), the cutoff rose from a little over $39 million to just above $41 million.

Leading the individual agent rankings, Carrie McCormick of @properties Christie's generated nearly $200 million in 2024 residential sales in the six-county area. It helped that she had one penthouse deal at the St. Regis that alone accounted for $7 million. On the team side, Coldwell Banker's Dawn McKenna Group ranks first, at nearly $300 million.

Illustration by VISBII

Top Real Estate Agents

Rankings based on 2024 residential sales in the six-county metro area

	AGENT	COMPANY	SALES (IN MILLIONS OF $)
1	Carrie McCormick	*@properties Christie's*	197.0
2	Nicholas Solano	*Twin Vines*	179.6
3	Jena Radnay	*@properties Christie's*	133.9
4	Susan Miner	*Premier Relocation*	121.3
5	Paige Dooley	*Compass*	113.7
6	Nancy Tassone	*Jameson Sotheby's*	95.1
7	Andra O'Neill	*@properties Christie's*	83.1
8	Timothy Salm	*Jameson Sotheby's*	81.7
9	Sam Shaffer	*Chicago Properties*	75.5
10	Chezi Rafaeli	*Coldwell Banker*	75.0
11	Cory Green	*Compass*	72.8
12	Sarah Toso	*RE/Max*	70.5
13	Daniel Close	*Redfin*	63.7
14	Jason O'Beirne	*Jameson Sotheby's*	62.1
15	Melissa Kingsbury	*Redfin*	61.6
16	Nathan Stillwell	*John Greene*	57.6
17	Anne Dubray	*Coldwell Banker*	57.5
18	Linda Feinstein	*Compass*	56.2
19	Bradley Brondyke	*Jameson Sotheby's*	55.5
20	Joanne Nemerovski	*Compass*	54.9
21	Debra Dobbs	*Compass*	53.3
22	Phil Skowron	*Compass*	50.2
23	Lina Shah	*Coldwell Banker*	50.1
24	Niko Voutsinas	*Redfin*	49.2
25	Linda Levin	*Jameson Sotheby's*	48.9
26	Millie Rosenbloom	*Baird & Warner*	48.9
27	Robbie Morrison	*Coldwell Banker*	45.8
28	Benjamin Hickman	*RE/Max*	45.4
29	Laura Fitzpatrick	*@properties Christie's*	45.1
30	Dave Chung	*Compass*	44.9
31	Layching Quek	*Redfin*	43.2
32	Julie Fleetwood	*Jameson Sotheby's*	41.7
33	Mary Grant	*@properties Christie's*	40.3
34	Greg Cirone	*XR Realty*	39.4
35	Susan Maman	*@properties Christie's*	38.7
36	Michael Hall	*Baird & Warner*	38.7
37	Marina Carney	*Compass*	37.8
38	Cathy Oberbroeckling	*Baird & Warner*	37.3
39	Michael Rosenblum	*BHHS Chicago*	36.8
40	Courtney Stach	*Compass*	36.0
41	Susan Amory Weninger	*@properties Christie's*	35.4
42	Brent Wilk	*Wilk Real Estate*	34.5
43	Margie Brooks	*Baird & Warner*	34.1
44	Tracy Anderson	*Compass*	33.8
45	Michael Maier	*BHHS Chicago*	33.5
46	Katie Hackett	*@properties Christie's*	33.4
47	Keith Brand	*BHHS Chicago*	33.3
48	Natalie Weber	*Keller Williams*	33.1
49	Hadley Rue	*Dream Town*	32.7
50	Kathleen Malone	*Compass*	32.4
51	Simran Dua	*RE/Max*	32.4
52	Brandie Malay Siavelis	*@properties Christie's*	31.5
53	Scott Curcio	*Baird & Warner*	31.5
54	Vaseekaran Janarthanam	*RE/Max*	30.9
55	Nicholas Colagiovanni	*Baird & Warner*	30.6
56	Briana Murray	*@properties Christie's*	30.5
57	Sara Brahm	*@properties Christie's*	30.1
58	Kimberly Brown-Lewis	*Redfin*	30.0
59	Katherine Malkin	*Compass*	29.7
60	Jacqueline Colando	*Redfin*	29.4
61	Jan Morel	*@properties Christie's*	29.3
62	Emily Smart LeMire	*Compass*	29.0
63	Stacey Dombar	*Redfin*	28.9
64	Leslie Glazier	*@properties Christie's*	28.7
65	Brian Behan	*@properties Christie's*	28.4
66	Susan O'Connor Davis	*BHHS Chicago*	28.0
67	Steve Dombar	*Redfin*	28.0
68	Megan McCleary	*Jameson Sotheby's*	27.9
69	Kimberly Cardilli	*Redfin*	27.9
70	Nathan Freeborn	*Redfin*	27.8
71	Anne Hodge	*Compass*	27.6
72	Annika Valdiserri	*@properties Christie's*	27.5
73	Stephanie LoVerde	*Baird & Warner*	27.4
74	Swati Saxena	*Baird & Warner*	27.2
75	Salvador Gonzalez	*RE/Max*	27.1
76	Katherine Karvelas	*@properties Christie's*	27.0
77	Ryan Smith	*RE/Max*	26.9
78	Andy Mrowiec	*Compass*	26.8
79	Brandon Blankenship	*Keller Williams*	26.8
80	Shaun Raugstad	*Coldwell Banker*	26.7
81	Beth Burtt	*@properties Christie's*	26.6
82	Megan Tirpak	*@properties Christie's*	26.3
83	Mark Keppy	*Dream Town*	26.3
84	John Litrenta	*Redfin*	26.1
85	Mona Hellinga	*@properties Christie's*	25.9
86	Tracy Tran	*Coldwell Banker*	25.9
87	James Ziltz	*Jameson Sotheby's*	25.7
88	Vipin Gulati	*RE/Max*	25.6
89	Jeff/Amjad Salhani	*RE/Max*	25.6
90	Todd Szwajkowski	*Dream Town*	25.5
91	Roman Patzner	*Fulton Grace*	25.2
92	Camie Cirrincione	*Redfin*	25.0
93	Dave Shalabi	*RE/Max*	24.9
94	Laura Garcia	*@properties Christie's*	24.8
95	Ashley Spector	*Compass*	24.7
96	Ginny Stewart	*Jameson Sotheby's*	24.7
97	Jennifer Olson Jones	*Baird & Warner*	24.4
98	David J. Cobb	*RE/Max*	24.2
99	Susan Teper	*@properties Christie's*	24.1
100	Margaret Smego	*Jameson Sotheby's*	24.1

SOURCE: Data provided by agencies

No. 1

CARRIE McCORMICK

@properties Christie's

What are buyers looking for these days? We've seen a flight to quality. People are tending to go toward new construction or something that was done with high-quality finishes. Anything that needs updating, that's more than 20 years old, that's the stuff that has been more stagnant, because people don't have the vision or time for updates.

Where has the market been surging? In the downtown market—Streeterville and River North—there was a post-pandemic dip, and pricing got to a point where it made sense to buy. I've been setting records in River North.

PHOTOGRAPH: NATHANAEL FILBERT

SALES ABOVE $20 MILLION

- **Jim Abbott**
  Baird & Warner
- **Mark Ahmad**
  Century 21
- **Ashley Arzer**
  Redfin
- **Elizabeth August**
  @properties Christie's
- **Mario R. Barrios**
  RE/Max
- **Beth Behling**
  Redfin
- **Dan Bergman**
  Redfin
- **Alan Berlow**
  Coldwell Banker
- **Jack Brennan**
  @properties Christie's
- **Christopher Campbell**
  Redfin
- **Joseph Champagne**
  Coldwell Banker
- **Courtney Cook**
  @properties Christie's
- **Ashley Cox**
  Compass
- **Crystal DeKalb**
  Redfin
- **Rory Dominick**
  Keller Williams
- **Marty Dunne**
  BHHS Chicago
- **Eudice Fogel**
  Compass
- **Naveena Ganesan**
  John Greene
- **Joe Tyler Gerber**
  Coldwell Banker
- **Nancy Gibson**
  @properties Christie's
- **Chris Gomes**
  Jameson Sotheby's
- **Bobby Grilli**
  Jameson Sotheby's
- **Leopoldo Gutierrez**
  Redfin
- **Anne Hardy**
  BHHS Chicago
- **Debbie Hepburn**
  @properties Christie's
- **Ann Hoglund**
  @properties Christie's
- **Victoria Holmes**
  BHHS Chicago
- **Juany Honeycutt**
  Jameson Sotheby's
- **Joanne Hudson**
  Compass
- **Theo Jordan**
  Compass
- **Ken Jungwirth**
  @properties Christie's
- **David Korkoian**
  Redfin
- **R. Matt Leutheuser**
  Jameson Sotheby's
- **Danny Lewis**
  Dream Town
- **Sarah Machmouchi**
  Redfin
- **Paul Mancini**
  @properties Christie's
- **Stephanie Miller**
  Redfin
- **Raymond Morandi**
  Morandi Properties
- **Dan Nelson**
  Compass
- **Barb Noote**
  Compass
- **Cadey O'Leary**
  @properties Christie's
- **Christopher Paul**
  Redfin
- **Lindsey Paulus**
  @properties Christie's
- **Pasquale Recchia**
  @properties Christie's
- **Veronica Rodriguez**
  Redfin
- **Becky Sexson**
  Baird & Warner
- **Robert Sikkel**
  @properties Christie's
- **George Simic**
  John Greene
- **Amy Smith**
  RE/Max
- **Selena Stloukal**
  RE/Max
- **Kathy Szuba**
  RE/Max
- **Terrie Whittaker**
  Redfin
- **Becky Wipperfurth**
  Redfin
- **Adam Zenullahi**
  Redfin

SALES ABOVE $15 MILLION

- **Cory Albiani**
  @properties Christie's
- **Jacqueline Alter**
  Redfin
- **Patrick Alvarez**
  Jameson Sotheby's
- **Christy Alwin**
  Redfin
- **Jackie Angiello**
  Keller Williams
- **Vinita Arora**
  Coldwell Banker
- **Rick Babb**
  John Greene
- **Deb Baker**
  Compass
- **Lori Baker**
  Compass
- **Connie Barhorst**
  Baird & Warner
- **Adrien Bellagio**
  Jameson Sotheby's
- **David Betancourt**
  Redfin
- **Kate Boyle**
  @properties Christie's
- **Fabio Brancati**
  @properties Christie's
- **Majbrith Brody**
  Baird & Warner
- **Shelley Brzozowski-O'Grady**
  @properties Christie's
- **Melanie Carlson**
  @properties Christie's
- **Christie Carmody**
  Fulton Grace
- **Julie Cassin**
  @properties Christie's
- **Elizabeth Caya**
  Redfin
- **Sylvia Chliborob**
  Redfin
- **Jill Clark**
  Compass
- **Dan Collins**
  @properties Christie's
- **Jen Conte**
  RE/Max
- **Susan Cook**
  Compass
- **Maria Cullerton**
  Compass
- **Frank DeNovi**
  Compass
- **Yvonne Despinich**
  @properties Christie's
- **Nichole Dinino**
  Redfin
- **Craig Doherty**
  @properties Christie's
- **Tadeusz Dolecki**
  RE/Max
- **Melissa Edidin**
  @properties Christie's
- **Will Finfrock**
  Redfin
- **Lisa Finks**
  Compass
- **Ronda Fish**
  Jameson Sotheby's
- **Lyn Flannery**
  @properties Christie's
- **Marzena Frausto**
  Redfin
- **Kathie Frerman**
  @properties Christie's
- **Kristine Frost**
  Compass
- **Patti Furman**
  Coldwell Banker
- **Suzanne Gigniliat**
  @properties Christie's
- **Sean Glascott**
  @properties Christie's
- **Claudia Goehner**
  Redfin
- **Lindy Goss**
  Baird & Warner
- **Michael Graff**
  Compass
- **Kim Grant**
  John Greene
- **Prentiss Grant**
  RE/Max
- **Mike Greco**
  Baird & Warner
- **Amy Gugliuzza**
  Redfin
- **Sue Hall**
  @properties Christie's
- **Coco Harris**
  Compass
- **Martha Harrison**
  @properties Christie's
- **Jan Hazlett**
  @properties Christie's
- **Kim Heller**
  Baird & Warner
- **Mike Herrick**
  Redfin
- **Cornelis Hoogstraten**
  RE/Max
- **Connie Hoos**
  Coldwell Banker
- **Denis Horgan**
  Redfin
- **Nancy Hotchkiss**
  BHHS Chicago
- **Kate Huff**
  @properties Christie's
- **Katie Hutchens**
  Jameson Sotheby's
- **Ryan Huyler**
  Compass
- **Chloé Ifergan**
  Jameson Sotheby's
- **Gina Johansen**
  Keller Williams
- **Cesar Juarez**
  Redfin
- **Julie Kaczor**
  Baird & Warner
- **Amber Kardosh**
  @properties Christie's
- **Kevin Kemp**
  RE/Max
- **Greg Klemstein**
  RE/Max
- **Karolina Klinowski**
  Coldwell Banker
- **Zachary Koran**
  Dream Town
- **Victoria Krause Schutte**
  @properties Christie's
- **Jeannie Kurtzhalts**
  Compass
- **Brett Larson**
  Redfin
- **Mike Larson**
  Jameson Sotheby's
- **Michael LeFevere**
  Compass
- **Noah Levy**
  Compass
- **Davia Lipscher**
  @properties Christie's
- **Edward Lukasik Jr.**
  RE/Max
- **Michell Lukasik**
  RE/Max
- **Timothy Lydon**
  RE/Max
- **Jessica Macey**
  Heart of Chicago Homes
- **Karen Majerczak**
  Compass
- **Glo Matlin**
  Compass
- **Keith McMahon**
  Compass
- **Alissa McNicholas**
  Compass
- **Ashraf Memon**
  Coldwell Banker
- **Howard Meyers**
  Compass
- **Tiffeny Meyers**
  Baird & Warner
- **Chase Michels**
  Compass
- **Mathew Milan Tarailo**
  @properties Christie's
- **Patrick Milhaupt**
  Jameson Sotheby's
- **Ralph Milito**
  @properties Christie's
- **Michael Mitchell**
  @properties Christie's
- **Dimpi Mittal**
  Coldwell Banker

No. 31

LAYCHING QUEK
Redfin

What should buyers know about this market? You really have to have the stomach for it. Contingencies are being waived, inspections are being waived. It's not just about the price. You have to understand the risk and be ready to pony up.

- **Dave Moreno**
  Redfin
- **Khaled Muza**
  RE/Max
- **Randy Nasatir**
  @properties Christie's
- **Nevin Nelson**
  Redfin
- **Neringa Northcutt**
  @properties Christie's
- **Michael Odeh**
  Redfin
- **Andres Olaez**
  RE/Max
- **Trish Orndorff**
  @properties Christie's
- **Scott Ottenheimer**
  Baird & Warner
- **Jennifer Oukrust**
  Compass
- **Jacqueline Patton**
  Baird & Warner
- **Ryan Pavey**
  Baird & Warner
- **Chris Pequet**
  Jameson Sotheby's
- **Heidi Peterson**
  RE/Max
- **Lisa Petrik**
  Jameson Sotheby's
- **Jasmine Popoca**
  Redfin
- **Tere Proctor**
  @properties Christie's
- **Christopher Prokopiak**
  Redfin
- **Jennifer Rasmussen**
  @properties Christie's
- **Jacob Reiner**
  Redfin
- **Lindsey Richardson**
  Dream Town
- **Rick Richker**
  @properties Christie's
- **Elise Rinaldi**
  @properties Christie's
- **Leonardo Rojas Molina**
  Redfin
- **Jamie Roth**
  Engel & Völkers
- **Kelly Rynes**
  BHHS Chicago
- **Susie Scheuber**
  RE/Max
- **Kathy Schrage**
  Redfin
- **Kate Seemann**
  Redfin
- **Julia Seitchik**
  Jameson Sotheby's
- **Peggy Sersen**
  Redfin
- **Jody Sexton**
  @properties Christie's
- **Elizabeth Sheeran**
  @properties Christie's
- **Shelley Shelly**
  @properties Christie's
- **Beau Shirley**
  Coldwell Banker
- **Lea Smirniotis**
  @properties Christie's
- **Cindi Sodolski**
  Compass
- **Sara Sogol**
  Redfin
- **Kristy Sreenan**
  Baird & Warner
- **Eamonn Stafford**
  @properties Christie's
- **Jeff Stainer**
  RE/Max
- **Jenny Stokes Habetler**
  Redfin
- **Cynthia Stolfe**
  Redfin
- **Dan Straus**
  Dream Town
- **Jake Tasharski**
  Compass
- **Patrick Teets**
  Jameson Sotheby's
- **Aly Tesar**
  @properties Christie's
- **Jennifer Vande Lune**
  @properties Christie's
- **Chris Veech**
  @properties Christie's
- **Colleen Verbiscer**
  @properties Christie's
- **Madison Verdun**
  Keller Williams
- **Anna Villarejo Ruiz**
  RE/Max
- **Mary Wallace**
  Coldwell Banker
- **Lynda Wehrli**
  @properties Christie's
- **India Whiteside**
  @properties Christie's
- **Keith Wilkey**
  BHHS Chicago
- **Anita Willms**
  Redfin
- **Laura Woltersdorf**
  RE/Max
- **David Yocum**
  Redfin
- **Melanie Young**
  Keller Williams

PHOTOGRAPH: COURTESY OF LAYCHING QUEK

Top Real Estate Teams

Rankings based on 2024 residential sales in the six-county metro area

	TEAM	COMPANY	SALES (IN MILLIONS OF $)
1	Dawn McKenna Group	*Coldwell Banker*	298.3
2	Laricy Team	*Americorp*	267.8
3	Jane Lee Team	*RE/Max*	260.6
4	Lowe Group	*Compass*	250.7
5	Vesta Team	*Vesta Preferred*	229.5
6	Emily Sachs Wong	*@properties Christie's*	227.4
7	Sarah Leonard Team	*Legacy Properties*	182.5
8	Schiller Team	*@properties Christie's*	139.7
9	Ben Lalez Team	*Compass*	138.4
10	Leigh Marcus Team	*@properties Christie's*	135.9
11	Alex Stoykov Group	*Compass*	131.2
12	Wexler Gault Group	*@properties Christie's*	119.9
13	Morrison Home Team	*@properties Christie's*	119.0
14	Kim Alden Team	*Compass*	115.4
15	Sheahan Group	*Compass*	112.7
16	Bryan Bomba Group	*@properties Christie's*	111.6
17	Wilczek Bacza Group	*Wilczek & Bacza Brokers*	111.4
18	Klopas Stratton Team	*Jameson Sotheby's*	107.6
19	MG Group	*Compass*	100.7
20	DelBoccio/Marchetti Group	*@properties Christie's*	99.4
21	DoWell Group	*BHHS Chicago*	96.4
22	Mike McCatty Group	*Century 21*	96.3
23	Gagliardo Group	*Compass*	95.8
24	Connie Dornan Group	*@properties Christie's*	92.6
25	Qamar Group	*Real Brokerage*	87.6
26	Icuss Group	*Compass*	87.6
27	Brad Lippitz Group	*Compass*	86.3
28	DG Advisors Group	*Fulton Grace*	86.1
29	Refine Residential	*@properties Christie's*	83.9
30	Olive Well	*Compass*	82.7
31	Biazar Group	*North Clybourn Group*	80.3
32	Westhoff Group	*Compass*	79.4
33	Team Fallico	*Dream Town*	79.0
34	GetBurbed	*@properties Christie's*	78.1
35	Lance Kammes Team	*RE/Max*	73.8
36	Larysa Domino	*@properties Christie's*	73.6
37	Sergio & Banks	*@properties Christie's*	73.1
38	Flora Blahnik Group	*@properties Christie's*	72.7
39	Melissa Siegal Group	*@properties Christie's*	71.9
40	Monarque Group	*@properties Christie's*	71.2
41	Kate Waddell Group	*Compass*	70.9
42	Rubenstein Fox Team	*Baird & Warner*	68.2
43	Currey Koertgen Team	*RE/Max*	68.2
44	Moy Group	*@properties Christie's*	67.4
45	Home Discovery Team	*Jameson Sotheby's*	67.2
46	Scott Group	*Compass*	66.5
47	Gold Group	*@properties Christie's*	65.6
48	Second City Agents	*Compass*	65.4
49	Ames Group Chicago	*Engel & Völkers*	65.2
50	Dean Tubekis Team	*Coldwell Banker*	63.5
51	Arrow Home Advisors	*Compass*	63.0
52	Lotzof Malk Residential	*Compass*	62.3
53	Fu Group	*@properties Christie's*	61.4
54	Leslie McDonnell Team	*RE/Max*	61.0
55	Danny Glick Group	*@properties Christie's*	60.9
56	RR Galaxy	*Keller Williams*	59.8
57	Weinberg Choi	*Keller Williams*	59.6
58	RP Group	*Jameson Sotheby's*	59.5
59	Cindy Banks Team	*RE/Max*	59.0
60	Busby Group	*Compass*	58.6
61	Chicago Home Collective	*Compass*	58.2
62	Jill Silverstein Group	*Compass*	58.1
63	McGovern Group	*RE/Max*	58.1
64	Blackshaw Messel Group	*Compass*	57.8
65	Kelly Stetler Team	*Compass*	56.9
66	MacPherson Group	*@properties Christie's*	55.5
67	Seventy7 Group	*Fulton Grace*	54.8
68	Ville Team	*Coldwell Banker*	53.8
69	Kite Team	*Keller Williams*	53.4
70	Phair-Hinton Group	*Keller Williams*	53.1
71	Crystal Tran Team	*@properties Christie's*	53.1
72	Moda Group	*Compass*	52.8
73	Quaid & Rooney	*Keller Williams*	52.6
74	Cathy Bier Team	*Coldwell Banker*	52.2
75	Kris Berger Group	*Compass*	51.9
76	Trace Team	*@properties Christie's*	51.3
77	Mawicke Group	*@properties Christie's*	51.0
78	Yeager Team	*@properties Christie's*	50.8
79	Brian Grossman Group	*@properties Christie's*	50.3
80	Lake Group	*Compass*	49.6
81	Melanie Everett & Company	*Melanie Everett & Company*	49.0
82	MB Luxury Group	*@properties Christie's*	48.9
83	SK Group	*Fulton Grace*	48.1
84	Halleman Group	*John Greene*	48.0
85	Battista Casciaro Group	*Jameson Sotheby's*	47.9
86	Thomas Team	*@properties Christie's*	45.2
87	Jerfita Pierson	*Compass*	44.4
88	Hering Homes Team	*Coldwell Banker*	44.2
89	Randy Brush Team	*Coldwell Banker*	43.8
90	ATM Team	*BHHS Chicago*	43.6
91	Geeks Team	*RE/Max*	43.2
92	Capitanini Team	*Compass*	42.6
93	Shenfeld Group	*Jameson Sotheby's*	42.5
94	NL Ferrata Team	*Compass*	42.3
95	MVP Team	*Compass*	42.2
96	HL2R Group	*Baird & Warner*	42.0
97	Ted Pickus Team	*@properties Christie's*	42.0
98	Alice Chin Team	*Compass*	41.9
99	Prello Realty	*Prello Realty*	41.5
100	ZK Group	*@properties Christie's*	41.3

SOURCE: Data provided by agencies

No. 1

DAWN McKENNA
Coldwell Banker

Where is the market tightest? The North Shore and western suburbs. Most of those sellers have unbelievable mortgage rates, and they’re cautious about getting rid of that. If something’s priced well and looks great, they’re getting multiple offers.

SALES ABOVE $30 MILLION

- **Connie Antoniou Luxury Lifestyles**
  Jameson Sotheby’s
- **Christie Ascione Group**
  @properties Christie’s
- **Ballis Group**
  Compass
- **Baran Group**
  @properties Christie’s
- **Tim Binning Team**
  RE/Max
- **Rubina Bokhari Luxury Group**
  Compass
- **Buy Sell Love Chicago Team**
  @properties Christie’s
- **Camille Canales Group**
  Compass
- **Carrie & Renee Team**
  Compass
- **ChicagoHome Brokerage Network**
  @properties Christie’s
- **Chicago Home Partner**
  @properties Christie’s
- **Cor Team**
  Fulton Grace
- **Corwin Partners**
  Jameson Sotheby’s
- **Lauren Dayton Real Estate Group**
  Jameson Sotheby’s
- **Deidre Collective**
  Compass
- **Dom and Judie**
  @properties Christie’s
- **Thomas Domasik Team**
  RE/Max
- **Owen Duffy Group**
  Fulton Grace
- **DWK Realty Team**
  @properties Christie’s
- **Elevate Real Estate Team**
  Keller Williams
- **Foley Group**
  John Greene
- **Judy Greenberg Group**
  Compass
- **Heyday Homes**
  Keller Williams
- **Huyck Group**
  Keller Williams
- **Brandy Isaac Team**
  @properties Christie’s
- **Sam Jenkins Group**
  Jameson Sotheby’s
- **JG Group**
  Jameson Sotheby’s
- **Lori Johanneson Team**
  @properties Christie’s
- **JProctor Group**
  @properties Christie’s
- **Kaplan Team**
  @properties Christie’s
- **Duong Kim Global**
  Compass
- **Lavelle Group**
  @properties Christie’s
- **Vittoria Logli Team**
  @properties Christie’s
- **Lothamer Group**
  Compass
- **Lyon, Folker, Campbell, Mower Partners**
  @properties Christie’s
- **Jackie Mack & More**
  Jameson Sotheby’s
- **Mandel Residential**
  @properties Christie’s
- **Diana Matichyn Home Team**
  Coldwell Banker
- **McCann Properties**
  Keller Williams
- **Dorger McCarthy Group**
  Keller Williams
- **Steve McEwen Group**
  @properties Christie’s
- **MB Team**
  @properties Christie’s
- **MD Partners**
  @properties Christie’s
- **Meg & Katie Group**
  Compass
- **Moon Group**
  Keller Williams
- **Moustis Group**
  Keller Williams
- **Pattie Murray Team**
  BHHS Chicago
- **Brett Novack Group**
  @properties Christie’s
- **O’Connor Group**
  Dream Town
- **Team Luis Ortiz**
  RE/Max
- **Pagels Group**
  BHHS Chicago
- **Pak Group**
  Compass
- **Brian Pistorius Group**
  Compass
- **Relux Group**
  Compass
- **Rev Group**
  @properties Christie’s
- **Rullo Team**
  RE/Max
- **Saladino Sells Team**
  Keller Williams
- **Schwabe Group**
  Compass
- **Schwager Group**
  @properties Christie’s
- **Karen Schwartz Group**
  Dream Town
- **C Starr Team**
  @properties Christie’s
- **Streeterville Properties Group**
  Jameson Sotheby’s
- **Sullivan Rosenberg Team**
  BHHS Chicago
- **Julie Sutton Group**
  Compass
- **Wardlow Group**
  @properties Christie’s
- **Bill White Homes**
  Baird & Warner
- **Kevin Wood Group**
  @properties Christie’s
- **Your Home Group**
  Baird & Warner

SALES ABOVE $20 MILLION

- **Jean Anderson & Donna Mancuso**
  Jameson Sotheby’s
- **Vincent Anzalone Realtor Group**
  Dream Town
- **JimB. & Partners**
  Compass
- **George Bessette Team**
  RE/Max
- **Binkley Residential**
  Compass
- **Blume Group**
  Keller Williams
- **Brown Team**
  Baird & Warner
- **Kevin Burke Team**
  RE/Max
- **Burlington Group**
  @properties Christie’s
- **Byrne Group**
  Baird & Warner
- **Olivia Carlson Group**
  @properties Christie’s
- **Chicago Crib**
  Compass
- **Chicago Property Sisters Team**
  RE/Max
- **Chicago Residential Partners**
  Compass
- **Cobb Team**
  RE/Max
- **Stephanie Cutter Group**
  Coldwell Banker
- **Roback Czuprynski Team**
  Baird & Warner
- **Dazzo and Schneider**
  @properties Christie’s
- **Deal With Diamond Group**
  @properties Christie’s
- **Janelle Dennis Team**
  @properties Christie’s
- **Ellyn & Main**
  Keller Williams
- **Essence Realty Team**
  Keller Williams
- **Evermore Group**
  BHHS Chicago
- **Kate Fanselow Group**
  Compass
- **Fisher + Hasak**
  Compass
- **Flanagan Group**
  @properties Christie’s
- **Heather Fowler Group**
  @properties Christie’s
- **Frumentino Team**
  @properties Christie’s
- **Fuller Force**
  Baird & Warner
- **Bruce Glazer Group**
  @properties Christie’s
- **Glickman Residential**
  @properties Christie’s
- **Graff Group**
  Compass
- **Groho Group**
  @properties Christie’s
- **Group RE**
  BHHS Chicago
- **Hajdu & Bongiorno Residential Group**
  Dream Town
- **Hall Group**
  Baird & Warner
- **Hargey Group**
  @properties Christie’s
- **Häus Squad**
  @properties Christie’s
- **Hebson Team**
  Dream Town
- **Deb Hess and Partners**
  Compass
- **Highland Group**
  Fulton Grace
- **Ryan Hill Group**
  Century 21
- **Holley & Molly Team**
  Compass
- **Homes By Marco Team**
  RE/Max
- **Hughes Home Team**
  Compass
- **Jen Iaccino Group**
  @properties Christie’s
- **Ginny Jackson Group**
  Baird & Warner
- **Jasinski Home Team**
  BHHS Chicago
- **Jones Team**
  Baird & Warner
- **JS Group**
  BHHS Chicago
- **Kalamaras Group**
  @properties Christie’s
- **Kasper Group**
  Compass
- **KD Homes**
  BHHS Chicago
- **Tara Kelleher Team**
  @properties Christie’s
- **Kohler Group**
  Coldwell Banker
- **Ginny Leamy Team**
  Compass
- **Lubeck Group**
  Baird & Warner
- **Justin Lucas Group**
  @properties Christie’s
- **Kathryn and Kelly Mangel**
  @properties Christie’s
- **Lori Mattice Team**
  RE/Max
- **Laura McGreal Group**
  @properties Christie’s
- **Brett McIntyre & Beth Schoonenberg**
  John Greene
- **McKay Group**
  Coldwell Banker
- **Memeti Group**
  RE/Max
- **Midwest Investment Advisors**
  Keller Williams
- **Lucille Mierop Team**
  RE/Max
- **Courtney Monaco Group**
  Keller Williams
- **Tom Moran Team**
  @properties Christie’s

No. 53

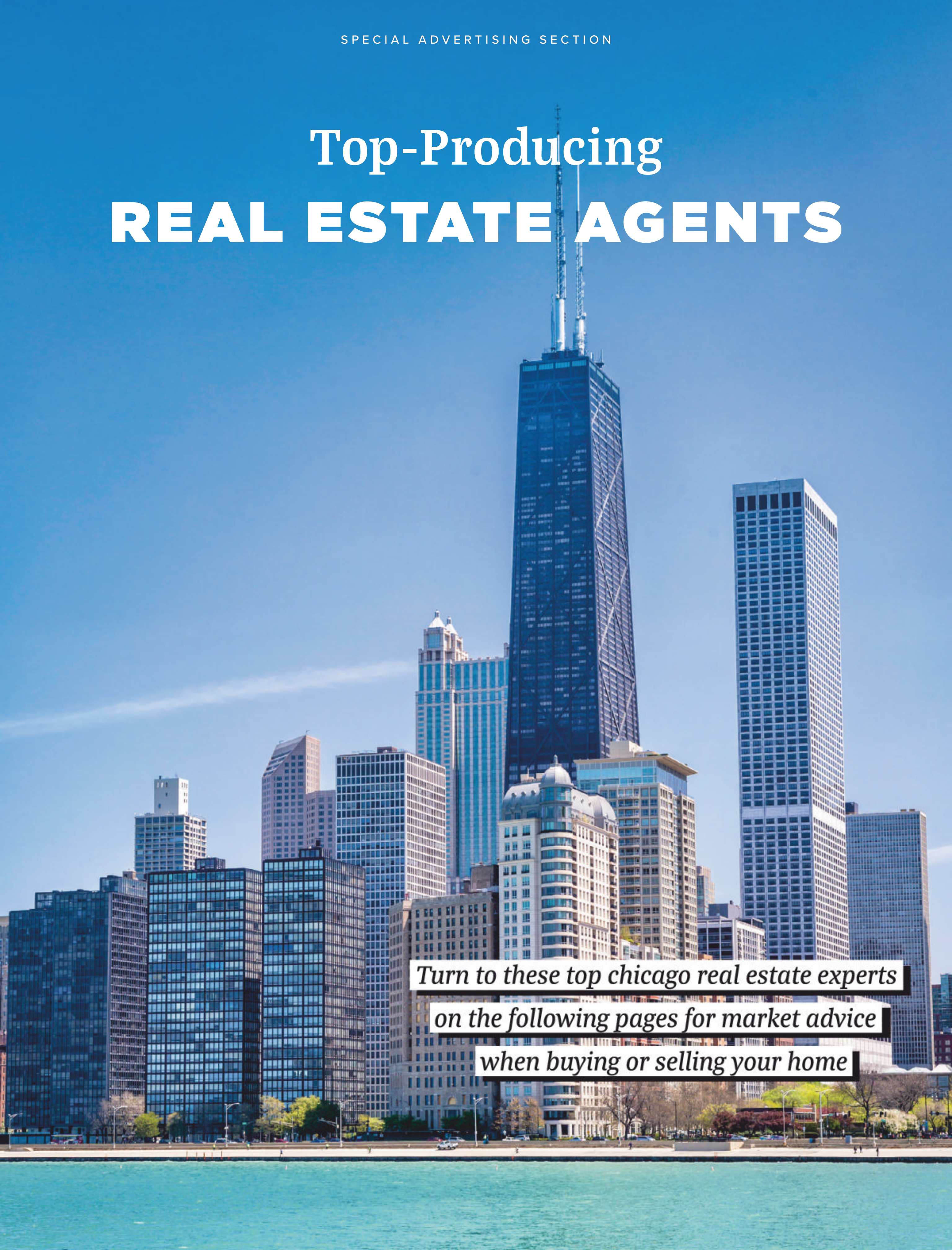
EUGENE FU
@properties Christie’s

What’s your best advice for buyers? You date the rate but marry the price. You can always refinance, but the price you pay is the price you pay. It’s better to capitalize on a price reduction.

- **Natasha Motev Chicago Fine Homes**
  Jameson Sotheby’s
- **Penny O’Brien Group**
  Baird & Warner
- **Team Open Doors**
  Compass
- **Pawlak Properties**
  Keller Williams
- **Phelps-Hanson Group**
  @properties Christie’s
- **Pickard Group**
  RE/Max
- **Kyra Pych Team**
  RE/Max
- **Quesada Group**
  Keller Williams
- **RH Group**
  Compass
- **Rizzo Group**
  Compass
- **RM Luxury Group**
  Compass
- **Romolo Group**
  @properties Christie’s
- **Carol Walsh Rosentreter Group**
  RE/Max
- **Lori Rowe Team**
  Coldwell Banker
- **Team Sachs**
  @properties Christie’s
- **Lisa Sanders Group**
  @properties Christie’s
- **Kelly Schmidt Group**
  Coldwell Banker
- **Schreiber Branning Weiss Team**
  @properties Christie’s
- **Julie Schultz Group**
  @properties Christie’s
- **Ian Schwartz Group**
  Coldwell Banker
- **Shore Group**
  Compass
- **Tim Sotis Team**
  RE/Max
- **Scott Stavish Group**
  @properties Christie’s
- **Stephen + Ryan**
  Keller Williams
- **Sterling Group**
  Keller Williams
- **Summerville Partners**
  Coldwell Banker
- **Victoria Tan Team**
  Compass
- **Basel Tarabein Team**
  RE/Max
- **Taub Stronberg Residential**
  @properties Christie’s
- **Michael Thornton Team**
  Keller Williams
- **Two Door Group**
  Compass
- **Mrs. Whitted Collective**
  Baird & Warner
- **Robert Wisdom Team**
  RE/Max
- **Lyn Wise Group**
  @properties Christie’s

PHOTOGRAPHY: (MCKENNA) COURTESY OF DAWN MCKENNA GROUP; (FU) SONYA MARTIN

Top-Producing
REAL ESTATE AGENTS



Turn to these top chicago real estate experts on the following pages for market advice when buying or selling your home

BRIAN BEHAN

@properties Christie's

After 17 years at the Chicago Board of Trade, Brian Behan sought a more fulfilling path and transitioned into real estate—a move that proved to be a perfect fit. A top-producing agent with @properties Christie's International Real Estate, Brian has built a thriving business organically, earning the distinction of selling more homes in River Forest over the past six years than any other individual agent.

A River Forest native, Brian combines deep local knowledge with a passion for architecture sparked by the work of Frank Lloyd Wright, EE Roberts, Jerome Cerny, and the Buurma Brothers. His analytical mindset, honed during his trading career, gives clients a competitive edge through data-driven insights and elite market research.

Brian is known for his customized approach and unwavering commitment to client relationships—many of which evolve into lasting friendships. His extensive network of contractors and service providers ensures smooth outcomes for everything from fixer-uppers to luxury builds.

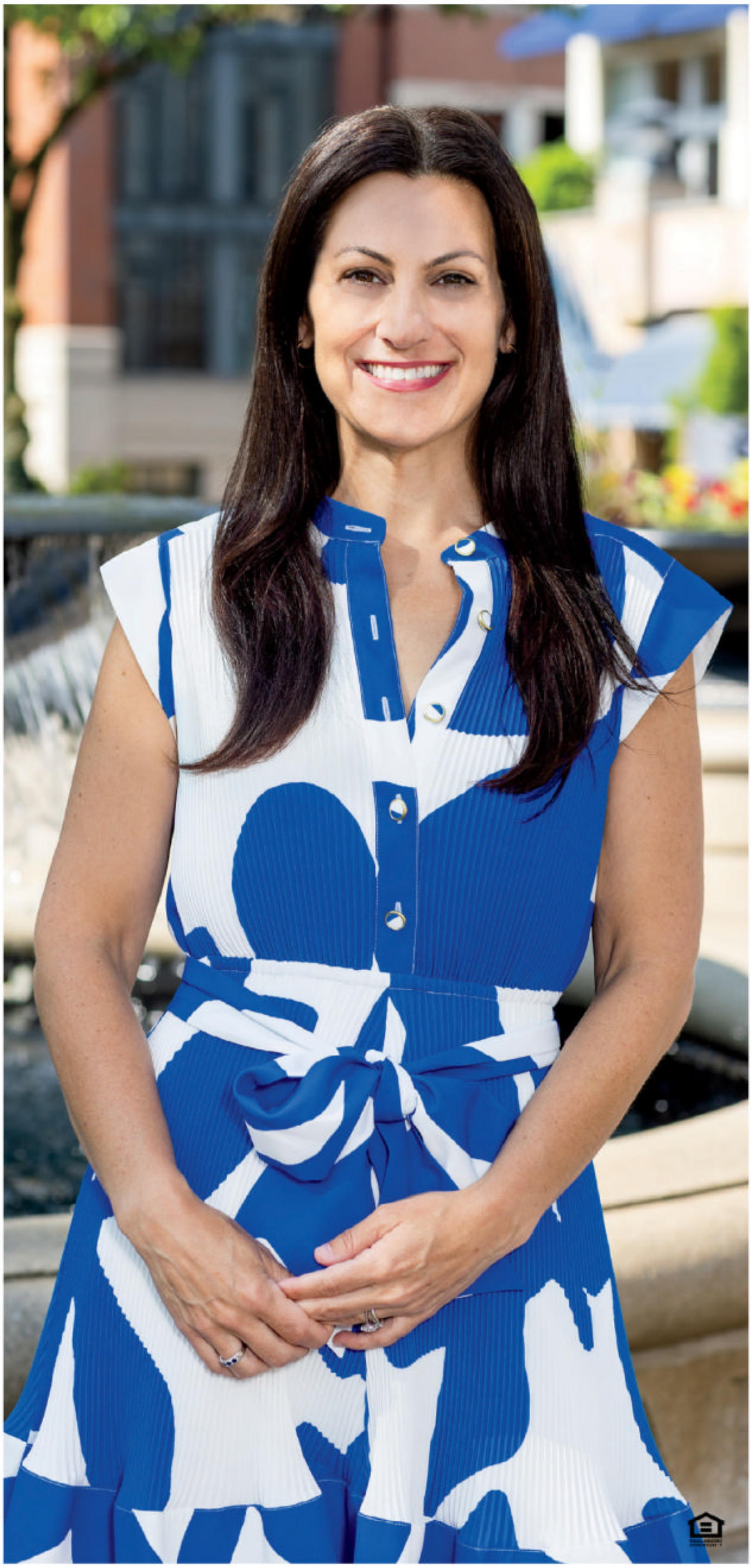
A proud community supporter, Brian is actively involved in local organizations including River Forest Youth Soccer and Baseball. Outside of work, he enjoys restoring vintage cars, riding motorcycles and road trips to The Rocky Mountains - all while raising his family in the town he's always called home.

BB BRIAN BEHAN
REALTOR®

BUILD • BUY • SELL • INVEST

806 N. Peoria St.,
Chicago, IL 60642
bbsellsoprf.com
bb@atproperties.com
312-480-1244

PHOTOGRAPH: FRANCIS SON



PHOTOGRAPH: FRANCIS SON

HOLLY CONNORS

GetBurbed at @properties Christie's International Real Estate

A Dominant Force in Chicagoland Real Estate.

Holly Connors isn't just a top agent—she's a powerhouse. A founding agent of @properties Christie's International Real Estate and the driving engine of the award-winning **GetBurbed** team, she is the #1 choice for buyers and sellers across Chicago's northwest and western suburbs.

With over **$1 billion in career sales** and more than **two decades of experience**, Holly is the definition of high-performance real estate. Her unmatched combination of relentless drive, precision strategy, and deep hyperlocal expertise delivers a competitive advantage her clients can feel—and her results prove it.

Holly doesn't just play the game—she changes it. Known for her **elite negotiation skills, innovative marketing,** and **data-driven, client-first approach,** she consistently exceeds expectations. Her clients choose her because she delivers—**without compromise.**

As a **mentor, industry leader, and community advocate,** Holly leads with purpose, passion, and an unwavering commitment to excellence. She's been recognized with the industry's highest honors, including **RealTrends Verified, Crain's Notable Residential Real Estate Broker, Top Producer by the Chicago Association of Realtors, and recognized in *Chicago* Magazine**—clear proof of her dominance and reputation.

Above all, Holly believes in **connection, collaboration, and delivering an exceptional experience** at every step. Whether buying, selling, investing, or planning your next move, Holly provides the needed success for any market.

GetBurbed

@properties | CHRISTIE'S INTERNATIONAL REAL ESTATE

31 S. Evergreen Ave.
Arlington Heights, IL 60005
holly@atproperties.com
773-383-2490

LINDA FEINSTEIN

Signature Homes Compass

Linda is recognized as one of the top performing real estate brokers in Chicagoland. She has been a leading agent in her office every year. With an education from Yale New Haven School of Nursing and University of Pennsylvania, as well as experience working as a nurse and actress in New York, it wasn't until after the birth of her sixth child that Linda decided to begin a new career in real estate. In doing so, she soon discovered a love for helping people through difficult life transitions, and it wasn't long before Linda achieved great success in the field. Today, Linda ranks in the top 1 percent of realtors in DuPage and Cook counties. Knowing the western suburbs and the greater Chicago area has helped her serve the needs of buyers and sellers across the region.

With her managing broker license and her GRI, CRS, ABR, and Senior Residential Specialist, Linda has received multiple awards and honors to recognize her success. This success is deeply rooted in her involvement with the community, as she places a high priority on community service.

A few years ago, Linda and many of the agents in her brokerage decided to make the move to Compass in order to continually grow, to better service more buyers and sellers, and to increase their ability to give back to the community. Today, Linda continues to deliver an unmatched level of personal service, integrity, and trust to her clients.

SIGNATURE
HOMES

22 N. Lincoln St.
Hinsdale, IL 60521
signaturehomes.properties
lindafeinsteinhome@gmail.com
630-319-0352

PHOTOGRAPH: ZACH LIPP

NANCY GIBSON

@properties Christie's

Consistently ranked as one of the top producers on Chicago's North Shore and an @ properties Christie's International "Top 100" agent, Nancy Gibson has been the #1 real estate broker in her hometown of Northbrook for 22 consecutive years achieving an impressive Three Quarters of a Billion Dollars in career sales.

Nancy attributes her success to the absolute trust her clients have in her ability to get the job done quickly and efficiently, always with their best interests in mind. Nancy's clients value her years of experience, in-depth marketplace knowledge, customized marketing plans and personal, hands on direction, whether it be preparing a home for sale or understanding a home's value in an ever-changing market. Clients also appreciate the close relationships Nancy has formed with other real estate professionals, helping make negotiations smooth and, most importantly, successful.

A testament to their satisfaction and trust is the massive amount of repeat business and referrals given to Nancy by her clients, including their children and other family members and friends. Nancy prides herself on providing the highest level of service and caring advice to ensure each and every client has a seamless and enjoyable buying or selling experience.

NANCY GIBSON
NUMBER1NANCY.COM

1314 Shermer Rd
Northbrook, IL 60062
atproperties.com
nancygibson@atproperties.com
847-509-0200

PHOTOGRAPH: FRANCIS SON

BRUCE GLAZER

@properties Christie's

Bruce Glazer & Company's passion for Chicago real estate truly shines.

In the past year alone, they closed over $21 million in residential sales and crossed over 450 career sales. Bruce is known for providing an exceptional, concierge-style experience for every client—from the very first meeting through closing and long after.

> *"Each sale isn't just a transaction—it's the start of a relationship that lasts for years,"* Bruce says.

A top-producing broker for well over a decade, Bruce specializes in luxury homes as well as helping first-time buyers and sellers navigate the market. Serving clients throughout Chicagoland and the North Shore, extending all the way to Indianapolis. He prides himself on working directly with clients every step of the way.

> *"I prefer to handle everything personally rather than pass clients off to an associate."*

With numerous accolades under his belt—including being named a "Notable Residential Real Estate Broker" by Crain's Chicago Business and ranking in the top 1.5% of Realtors nationwide—Bruce is a trusted voice in the Chicago market. His insights are regularly featured on local news and in major publications

Bruce is supported by a dedicated team that includes his wife, Taylor, and business partner, Stephanie Kuang. Both bring deep experience in sales and share Bruce's client-first philosophy. Together, they ensure every client receives expert guidance and top-tier service throughout their real estate journey.

From Left: Stephanie Kuang, Bruce, & Taylor Glazer

bruce glazer
CHICAGO REAL ESTATE

900 N. Michigan Ave., Ste. 800
Chicago, IL 60611
bruceglazer.com
bglazer@atproperties.com
765-914-8199

PHOTOGRAPH: FRANCIS SON

DANNY GLICK

Danny Glick Group

For more than 25 years, Danny Glick has guided clients through the purchase and sale of real estate with a focus on results, trust, and long-term value. From luxury residences to investment properties, his expertise helps clients make informed decisions with clarity and confidence.

As Broker/President of The Danny Glick Group at @properties Christie's International Real Estate, Danny brings a strategic approach shaped by his background in construction, development, and land acquisition. With hundreds of successful transactions completed, he is able to anticipate challenges and ensure a smooth and efficient transaction.

Clients value Danny's straightforward communication and thoughtful guidance. They describe him as steady, honest, and deeply committed—not just to closing a deal, but to protecting their interests every step of the way. Whether advising a first-time buyer or collaborating with seasoned developers, Danny stays focused on what matters most to his clients.

His business is built on lasting relationships, with many clients returning or referring others based on trust earned over decades. Outside of real estate, Danny trains for Ironman races and long-distance cycling—disciplines that reflect his focus, work ethic, and commitment to seeing things through to completion.

DANNYGLICK
GROUP

danny@dannyglick.com
312-820-8860

PHOTOGRAPH: FRANCIS SON

KEN JUNGWIRTH

@properties Christie's

Ken's goal is to make the buying and selling of property as enjoyable and pain free as possible for his clients. Ken is resourceful, detail-oriented and prides himself on providing his clients with timely communication. Even with the wealth of information on the internet today, you need a trusted advisor to help you analyze the data and be your advocate during the sales cycle.

Ken has been recognized as a top-producing agent by the Chicago Association of Realtors from 2007-2024. Ken consistently ranks in the Top 1% - 2% of all Chicago REALTORS year after year and attributes his success to his hands-on approach. He is also a top 12 agent in @properties Lincoln Park office.

Ken has over 350 million in sales and 21 years of proven results and experience. Ken has sold 130 million in real estate in the past 5 years alone. This experience allows Ken to give his clients sound advice as he knows the Chicago real estate market.

Ken has represented a wide range of properties from luxury condos to new construction developments and works with buyers and investors. With over 600 successful transactions under his belt, Ken has seen all that can happen when buying or selling a house and will give his clients sound advice. Ken has a wide array of inspectors, lenders, contractors, and trades that can help make the transaction as smooth as possible.

KJ

CHICAGO REAL ESTATE

548 W. Webster Ave.,
Chicago, IL 60614
www.kjchicago.com
kjungwirth@atproperties.com
773-398-5585

PHOTOGRAPH: FRANCIS SON

KATHERINE KARVELAS

@properties Christie's International Real Estate

Katherine Karvelas is a top 1% broker with @properties Christie's International Real Estate, recognized both in Chicagoland and nationally for her results-driven, relationship-focused approach. Known for her strategic expertise, fierce negotiation skills, and unwavering discretion, she represents high-net-worth clients who expect more than just a transaction—they seek a trusted advisor.

Her reputation has earned recognition in Crain's Chicago Business, The Real Deal, Chicago Magazine, and MSNBC. Yet what truly sets her apart is the lasting trust she builds. Clients describe her as sharp, compassionate, and ten steps ahead.

With two master's degrees and a background in construction and academic leadership, Katherine brings an analytical edge and commanding presence to every negotiation. Her approach is no-nonsense: data-driven, creatively executed, and obsessively client-focused. She navigates complex deals with precision, turning challenges into opportunities and ensuring her clients stay ahead.

Her elite network—built over years of collaboration with developers, investors, and trusted partners—unlocks access to off-market gems and strategic opportunities. Whether positioning a legacy estate or guiding a discreet acquisition, Katherine's reputation for excellence speaks volumes.

Beyond real estate, she serves on the board of University of Chicago Medicine AdventHealth Hinsdale, advises SuperFile, and supports organizations including the Women's Philoptochos Society.

When precision matters and excellence is non-negotiable, Katherine Karvelas delivers.

KK
KATHERINE KARVELAS
GROUP

@properties | CHRISTIE'S INTERNATIONAL REAL ESTATE

KatherineKarvelas.com
Katherine@KatherineKarvelas.com
630-935-8150

PHOTOGRAPH: FRANCIS SON

PHOTOGRAPH: FRANCIS SON

THE KLOPAS STRATTON TEAM

Jameson Sotheby's International Realty

The KlopasStratton Team is a powerhouse collaboration of top-producing brokers with over 100 years of combined experience in the Chicago real estate market. What sets us apart is our dynamic blend of skills, professional expertise, and a personalized approach that's rare in today's industry.

Though boutique in size, we deliver big results—offering exceptional client service, seasoned business acumen, and forward-thinking marketing strategies. We are **relationship-focused, not transaction-driven,** and our success is built entirely on client satisfaction—a commitment that has led to over **$1.5 billion** in closed real estate transactions.

Whether you're buying, selling, or investing, we're here to be your trusted advisors every step of the way.

Jason Stratton: 312-415-1551
Sophia Klopas: 312-927-0334
klopasstratton.com

KLOPAS STRATTON

Jameson | Sotheby's INTERNATIONAL REALTY

CARRIE MCCORMICK

@properties Christie's

For over two decades, Carrie McCormick has been at the forefront of the Chicago real estate scene, consistently delivering unparalleled results across all neighborhoods and price points. With a remarkable career amassing an impressive $2.2 billion in sales, she has firmly established herself as the epitome of luxury real estate.

Carrie's reputation precedes her, and her name has become synonymous with excellence and expertise in the industry. Her extensive experience and unwavering commitment to her clients have solidified her as a true luminary in the world of Chicago real estate.

In an era where digital presence is paramount, Carrie McCormick shines brightly. Her robust and engaging social media presence keeps her clients and followers informed about the latest market trends, opportunities, and exclusive listings. This dedication to staying ahead of the curve has made her a digital influencer in the world of luxury real estate.

Carrie's approach to marketing is nothing short of customized perfection. She understands that every property is unique, and her tailored strategies ensure that each listing receives the attention it deserves. Whether it's a luxury penthouse or a charming family home, Carrie knows how to showcase a property's finest attributes to attract the right buyers.

CARRIE
McCORMICK
LUXURY GROUP

@properties | CHRISTIE'S INTERNATIONAL REAL ESTATE

carriemccormickre.com
carrie@atproperties.com
312-961-4612

PHOTOGRAPH: FRANCIS SON

SUSAN MINER

Premier Relocation and Real Estate Services

As the Founder of Premier Relocation & Real Estate Services, Susan Miner has earned a reputation as one of the most savvy real estate brokers in Chicago. Her unique skill set includes law and MBA degrees and the tenacity and creativity to find unlisted "needle in the haystack" properties for her most sophisticated clients.

Susan has closed over $1 billion in sales and rentals including $500M in luxury Gold Coast buildings like 9 West Walton and Waldorf Astoria where she has also lived for 15 years. Susan has procured the highest-priced home purchase and rental in Chicago history. In 2024, she ranked #2 in individual Chicago residential real estate brokers by volume, a platinum producer, and a top 5 producing broker in Illinois.

Susan has developed a corporate relocation program to assist Fortune 500 companies recruit and relocate executives and families to Chicago. She has expanded Premier Relocation's presence by getting her sales license in Florida and partnering with an exclusive network of brokers in 85 U.S. markets and abroad. Susan utilizes this referral network for clients interested in purchasing or renting a second home in popular destinations such as Florida, Arizona, and Cabo.

PREMIER RELOCATION
AND REAL ESTATE SERVICES™

1640 N. Wells St., Ste. 203
Chicago, IL 60614
premier-relocation.com
sminer@premier-relocation.com
312-397-1923

PHOTOGRAPH: FRANCIS SON

JOANNE & RACHEL NEMEROVSKI

Compass

Joanne and Rachel Nemerovski are a powerhouse mother-daughter duo at the top of Chicago's luxury real estate market. With more than three decades of combined experience and over $1.5 billion in career sales, they bring deep expertise, trusted relationships, and unmatched market knowledge to every client interaction.

Joanne was formerly the No. 1 Individual Agent in the Midwest for Berkshire Hathaway before joining Compass as a founding member. Rachel, with a background in advertising and brand strategy at top global firms, brings a fresh, creative approach to marketing and client service. Together, they deliver an exceptional, full-service real estate experience that blends old-school hustle with modern insight.

Whether buying, selling, or relocating within the city, clients benefit from their legal, financial, marketing, and negotiation acumen—as well as their signature concierge-level care. Their team is known for getting results while making the process seamless, transparent, and even enjoyable.

Deeply rooted in Chicago, Joanne and Rachel understand the city's neighborhoods, schools, and evolving market dynamics. They're driven by one goal: delivering success for their clients, backed by the values that define JoanneSellsChicago—Honesty, Integrity, Results.

JoanneSellsChicago

2350 N. Lincoln Ave.
Chicago, IL 60614
joannesellschicago.com
312-720-4505

LANCE KIRSHNER

LAKE Group at Compass

Back row, from left: Julie Stanczak, Cristina Tu, Laura Lando. Front Row, from left: Lia Scala, Lance Kirshner, Nancy Gordon.

PHOTOGRAPH: SONYA MARTIN

With over 85 years of combined experience, the LAKE Group is a team of six dedicated real estate professionals consistently recognized as top-producing brokers in the industry. Our diverse networks and extensive experience allow us to adeptly represent buyers and sellers across a broad spectrum of properties, ranging from $75K to over well over $3M. From the bustling downtown neighborhood of the Loop to the well-manicured North Shore, and the more outlying suburbs, the LAKE Group serves a wide range of areas, evidenced by our impressive record of over 1,100 closed transactions. With an outstanding sales volume nearing $600 million, we deliver exceptional results, whether dealing with condos, townhouses, single-family homes, or multiunit apartment buildings. Our team maintains an average listing time of just 21 days throughout our careers, achieving an extraordinary 99.8% sales-to-list-price ratio. The common theme amongst the team is a shared commitment to providing concierge level real estate services with exceptional results.

LAKE GROUP

2350 N. Lincoln Ave., Ste. 300
Chicago, IL 60614
lakegroupchicago.com
lance.kirshner@compass.com
773-578-8080

2025 FIVE STAR
WEALTH MANAGERS

FIVE STAR PROFESSIONAL

WHO WILL BE NAMED?

Find out in a special section inside the NOVEMBER ISSUE.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR RESEARCH PROCESS, GO TO:
fivestarprofessional.com/public/research

FROM THE EDITORS OF *CHICAGO* MAGAZINE

The One Cookbook Every Chicagoan Should Own

LEARN HOW TO MAKE SIGNATURE DISHES SUCH AS:

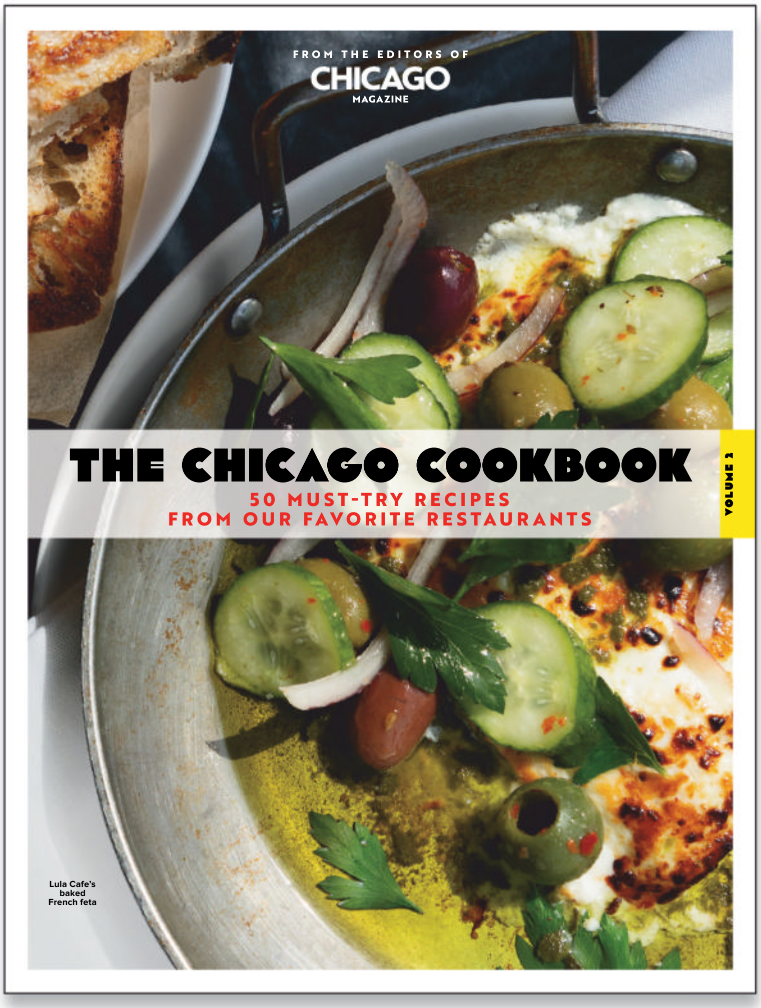
SHAW'S CRAB HOUSE'S
CHOPPED SEAFOOD SALAD

HOPLEAF'S
BELGIAN-STYLE MUSSELS

KASAMA'S
APPLE AND OAT FRANGIPANE GALETTE

ROSE MARY'S
CEVAPI

QXY'S
PORK DUMPLINGS


FROM THE EDITORS OF
CHICAGO
MAGAZINE

THE CHICAGO COOKBOOK

50 MUST-TRY RECIPES
FROM OUR FAVORITE RESTAURANTS

VOLUME 1

Lula Cafe's baked French feta

50

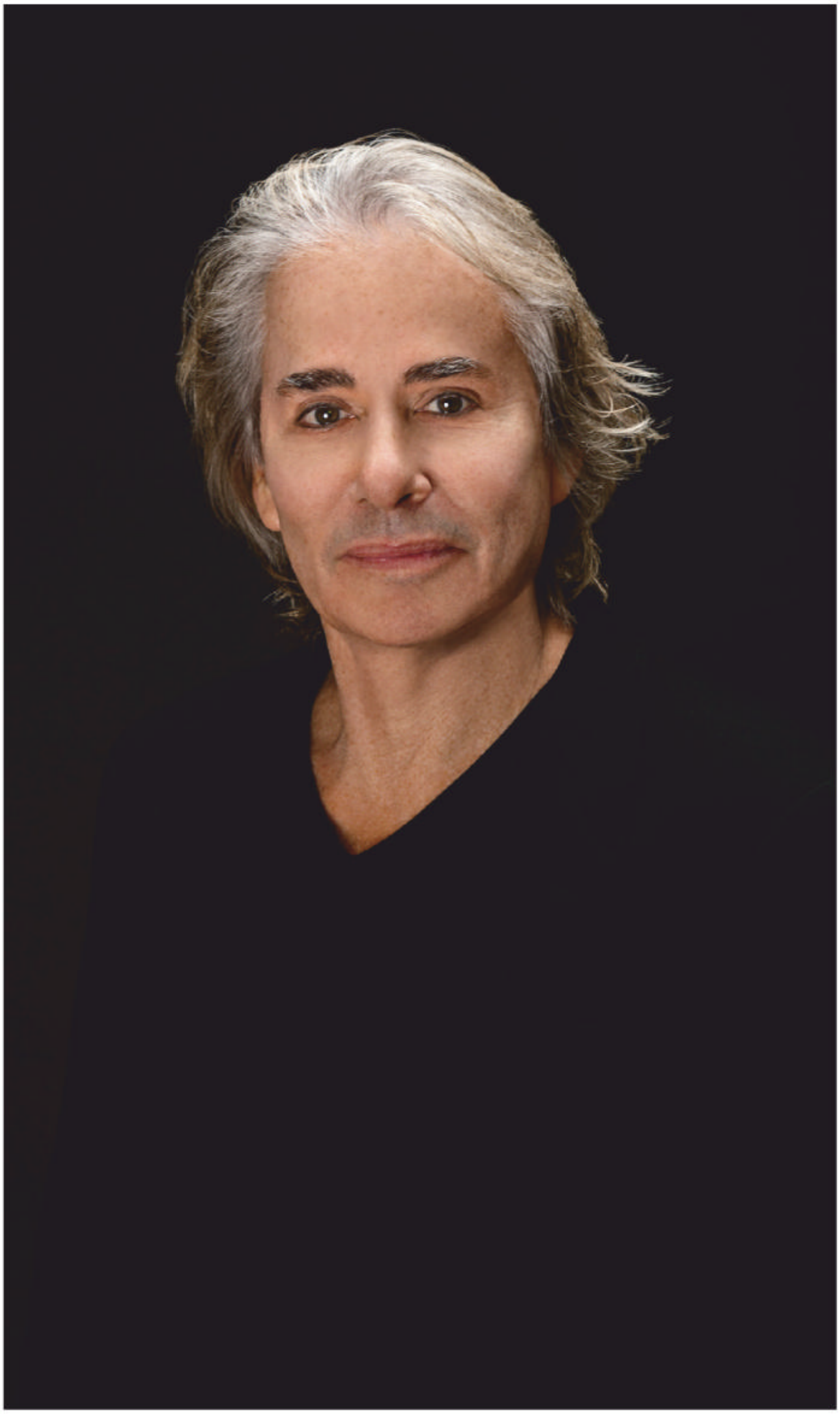
EASY-TO-FOLLOW RECIPES FOR OUR FAVORITE DISHES FROM OUR FAVORITE RESTAURANTS, ADAPTED FOR HOME COOKS

$14.99

ORDER YOUR COPY HERE:

MEDICAL PROFILES

Top physicians to consult for your medical procedures and services.



BODY BY BLOCH

STEVEN BLOCH, MD

Dr. Steven Bloch is a nationally recognized plastic surgeon with an international patient base. He has consistently been named a “top plastic surgeon.” He has been a leader in introducing advanced techniques in his Center of Excellence, including most recently the Vaser 4D Hi-Definition Liposculpture.

A board-certified plastic surgeon for more than 30 years, Dr. Bloch has the skills and experience to match. He rose to prominence quickly and has been featured on CBS, Discovery Channel, FOX News, NBC, *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, and WGN-TV Chicago, to name a few.

Dr. Bloch combines an artistic sense with a technical, scientific background to create a natural and refined look for his patients. He believes that each of us has an inner sense of how we should look, and the art of plastic surgery is to listen to each patient’s desires and needs. It is important to separate reality from fantasy. After a consultation with the patient, a plan is outlined and costs are discussed. The next step is to transform these dreams, when appropriate, into reality.

Dr. Bloch does not believe that his role ends with surgery. He is actively involved in the post-operative phase and has a dedicated staff to assist patients with their needs, whether medical or emotional.

Additionally, he has a nationally recognized medical spa with state-of-the-art, spare-no-expense, cutting-edge technologies to treat the entire body. The latest technology being introduced to the Chicago area is EmFace and Cool Peel. This really works and is painless. We guarantee it. Dr. Bloch supervises these treatments at Skin Deep Medical Spa, which has locations in Highland Park and Glenview.

All injections are given by Dr. Bloch; he believes your face is too important to delegate to a non-physician. Furthermore, a firm understanding of the aging process and underlying anatomy is critical to getting it right.

To learn about new and innovative treatment options, Dr. Bloch encourages you to visit his websites at bodybybloch.com and skindeepmedicalspa.com.

PHOTOGRAPH: FRANCIS SON

bodybybloch™

Body By Bloch
1160 Park Ave. W., Ste. 2E
Highland Park, IL 60035
847-432-0840

Skin Deep Medical Spa
1160 Park Ave. W., Ste. 2E
Highland Park, IL 60035
847-432-0426

Skin Deep Medical Spa
1986 Tower Dr.
Glenview, IL 60026
847-901-0800

bodybybloch.com
skindeepmedicalspa.com

PHOTOGRAPH: FRANCIS SON

DR. PETER D. GELDNER

THE GELDNER CENTER PLASTIC SURGERY & MED SPA

Go from ordinary to extraordinary with today's advanced cosmetic surgery and aesthetic procedures from The Geldner Center. Experience a whole new way to feel about yourself and gain a new outlook on life. Dr. Peter Geldner is a nationally recognized board-certified plastic surgeon specializing in cosmetic surgery of the face and body. He has performed surgery on thousands of satisfied patients over the past 33 years and has demonstrated the highest level of expertise in his field. The Geldner Center is committed to maximizing each patient's aesthetic goals while providing a personalized experience.

Dr. Geldner is past president of the Chicago Society of Plastic Surgeons and is considered one of the leading plastic surgeons in the Midwest. He is a perennial fixture on "best of" lists, both regionally and nationally. Dr. Geldner has been named a "Top Doctor" by *U.S. News and World Report*, Castle Connolly, the Consumers' Research Council of America, RealSelf, and *Chicago* magazine. When the media wants an expert, they talk to Dr. Geldner. He has shared his expertise on ABC, NBC, WGN, Fox Business, Fox News, the Learning Channel, Web MD Radio Live, and many other media outlets.

The Geldner Center's Chicago and west suburban locations feature nonsurgical treatments like Ultherapy, Moxi, BBL, Morpheus, CoolSculpting, Emsculpt Neo, Emtone, and Emface. Emface is a revolution in facial treatments. By admitting both synchronized RF and HIFES energies, it simultaneoulsy affects the skin and muscles. The end result is fewer wrinkles. Best of all, Emface treats the full face in only 20 minutes.

The Geldner Center also has licensed nurse injectors in both locations to meet your injectable needs as well as licensed medical aestheticians specializing in chemical peels, photo facials, laser therapy treatment, Ultherapy, Moxi, BBL, Morpheus, microneedling, skin care regimens, and more. We now offer infusion therapy to help with fatigue, anxiety, dehydration, antiaging, and more.

Together, Dr. Geldner and The Geldner Center staff can help you achieve the look you desire with the personalized care you deserve so you have the confidence to live life to the fullest.

THE GELDNER CENTER
PLASTIC SURGERY & MED SPA

680 N. Lake Shore Dr.
Ste. 1325
Chicago, IL 60611

2425 22nd W. St.
Ste. 212
Oak Brook, IL 60523

312-981-4440
Fax: 312-981-4441
mygeldnercenter.com

/thegeldnercenter
@mygeldnercenter
@thegeldnercenter

GEORGE F. WARGA, DDS

WINNETKA DENTAL ARTS AND IMPLANTS

Dr. George Warga specializes in identifying the underlying causes of dental concerns and instability resulting from developmental issues, previous dental or orthodontic procedures, or traumatic events. We provide our patients with comprehensive dentistry, including cosmetic bonding and veneers, orthodontics, implant and prosthetic reconstruction, and TMJ treatment.

For over 30 years, Dr. Warga has helped patients reclaim their comfort, beauty and health with innovative, conservative and cost-effective solutions. Your overall general health is Dr. Warga's ultimate concern. Sleep-disordered breathing and sleep apnea, often overlooked by physicians, is a primary causative agent for various health issues including snoring, ADHD, depression, gastric reflux, atrial fibrillation, diabetes, obesity, heart attacks, strokes, allergies, insomnia and TMJ dysfunction. To regain your health and energy, Dr. Warga offers convenient at-home sleep studies to diagnose and treat obstructive breathing disorders with oral appliance therapy in lieu of CPAP treatment. Oral appliances are less intrusive and more readily accepted by patients than being tethered to a cumbersome CPAP machine.

Many individuals may face challenges with previous dental procedures or experience setbacks in their orthodontic treatment which can cause bite instability, tooth and jaw discomfort (TMJ pain), and the loss of teeth and the destruction of implants, veneers and crowns. Though most orthodontists treat patients to finish as a Class 1 (normal bite), it is often not feasible to correct a severe overbite or underbite (Class 2 or 3) and finish them to this position. These patients are often advised to undergo extensive surgical and dental procedures to address their dental and cosmetic concerns. However, Dr. Warga takes an innovative approach utilizing his extensive training and experience in the understanding of treating these complex conditions. Conservative and cost-effective unique solutions are offered instead of surgical interventions or more costly and extensive procedures. The ultimate goal is to provide you with health and lifelong satisfaction and stability and if desired, a naturally beautiful smile.

Dr. Warga's practice incorporates cutting-edge technology, including state-of-the-art 3D scanning, smile design and on-site printing. These advanced tools enable him to artistically design and create smile makeovers with exceptional precision and efficiency.

Beyond his clinical knowledge, Dr. Warga is a nationally recognized teacher and speaker in comprehensive restorative dentistry. With over 30 years of experience, he has maintained a private practice dedicated to delivering comprehensive dental care tailored to patients' unique oral health needs.

To learn more about the range of services we provide, please visit our website at winnetkadentalarts.com. We would be delighted to assist you in achieving predictable health and the smile of your dreams.

WINNETKA DENTAL ARTS

570 Lincoln Ave.
Winnetka, IL 60093
847-441-6510
winnetkadentalarts.com

PHOTOGRAPH: FRANCIS SON

MARKETPLACE

An extraordinary collection of eagle rings - masterfully handcrafted into exceptional designs. Heavy in weight, extreme in detail, made one-at-a-time and guaranteed 100%.

Made in Chicago

Available in sterling silver, 10k, 14k or 18k gold.

The Carroll Collection
EagleRings.com
888-512-1333

LEGAL SERVICES

DADS' RIGHTSSM
ADVOCATING FOR DADS 24/7

Law Offices of
Jeffery M. Leving, Ltd.
Matrimonial Trial Attorneys

DADSRIGHTS.COM

312-807-3990 | *Follow our victories!*

SWEETHAVEN RESORT

SWEETHAVEN RESORT
9517 Union Pier Rd., Union Pier, MI 49129
www.sweethaven.com | 269-469-0332

One, two, three and five bedroom fully furnished cottages. Lavishly appointed with a full kitchen, TV, free wi-fi, fireplace, hot-tub, deck with grill. Kids & pets are welcome.

PRIVATE PARTIES

Club Lucky BUCKTOWN / WICKER PARK
Good food and fun! Book your Private Party Room. Outdoor Patios. Pre-Set Family Style. Menus & Bar Packages Available. Cocktail Lounge. Now Delivering.
1824 W. Wabansia Ave, Chicago, IL 60622 • (773) 227-2300 • clubluckychicago.com

CHICAGO
MAGAZINE

FALL PROMOTIONS! — SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER 2025

Education
GUIDE
CHICAGOLAND'S GUIDE TO EXCELLENT EDUCATION

This September, showcase your programs, education courses, and other learning opportunities by participating in Chicago magazine's Education Guide special advertising feature. Encourage more than 421,371 readers to pursue leading educational and developmental opportunities in the region.

SPACE CLOSE: JULY 14
MATERIALS DUE: JULY 16

MEDICAL PROFILES
PEDIATRICS

This October, Chicago magazine's editorial team will feature the Castle Connolly Top Doctors: Pediatric Specialists in the Six-County Area. In addition to this content, we provide an advertising opportunity to highlight your medical profession and expertise within our "Medical Profiles".

SPACE CLOSE: AUGUST 11
MATERIALS DUE: AUGUST 13

experience
CHICAGO

The best things to see, do and experience throughout Chicagoland.

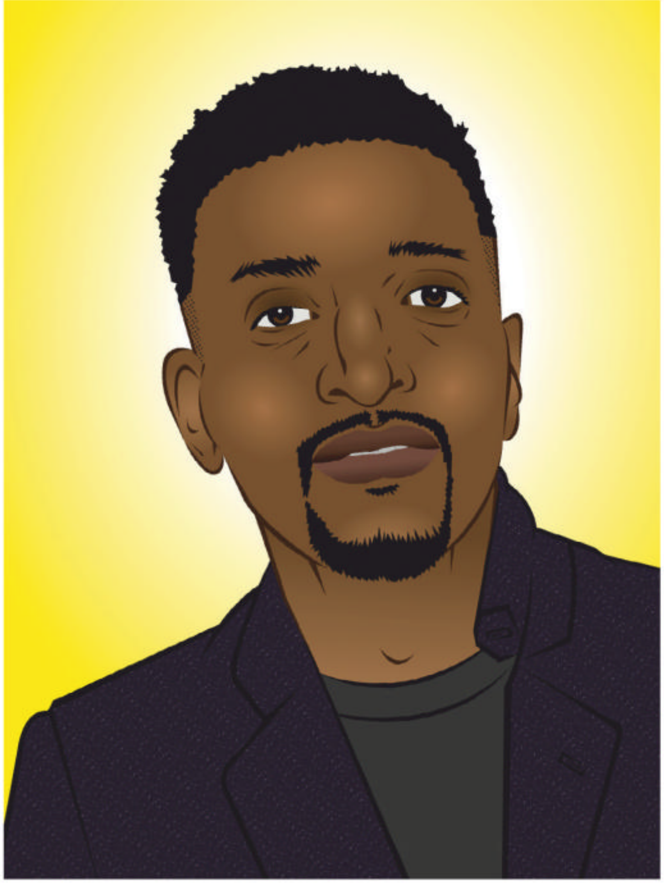
***77%** find Chicago magazine helpful when discovering local things to do*

***61%** attend live theatre performances*

***71%** visit museums*

SPACE CLOSE: AUGUST 15
MATERIALS DUE: AUGUST 16

For more information or to secure space, please contact your account manager or email Megan Holbrook at mholbrook@chicagomag.com



J. Ivy

The Grammy-winning poet, 49, on conquering nerves, taming a crowd, and beefing with Kanye

Interview by MIKE THOMAS

■ **MLK Jr. was my first influence and inspiration.** When my junior English teacher at Rich Central, Ms. Argue, made me do a talent show, I hit the stage thinking about King: *I want to speak the way he spoke, I want to command the crowd the way he did.* He was the pinnacle.

■ **When I did HBO's *Def Poetry Jam*, I got so nervous that I messed up and had to start over.** Using that moment, I was able to say, *OK, I'm never going to allow myself to get to the point again where I'm fumbling.* It's like, *Man, these are people. You perform for people all the time. This is family. You're good*. So ever since then, I get the excitement, the adrenaline, but not the "Oh my God!"

■ **For a long time, I would meet people who'd say, "What you do?"** "I'm a poet." "Oh yeah, that's cool. So what you do to make money?" I'm like, "I write poetry." People just couldn't fathom it. But stepping outside of myself, that *should* sound crazy as hell. It's remarkable to be able to make a living doing poetry.

■ **Continue to create.** You can't wait on people to ring you. I learned that early. After *Def Poetry Jam*, I was expecting my phone to ring off the hook, and it didn't. After "Never Let Me Down" on *College Dropout*, it didn't. At that time people still didn't know what to do with spoken word. So I said, *Let me show you*.

■ **Me and Kanye had a conversation that turned heated two or three years ago.** He was mad about things [in *Jeen-yuhs*, the documentary about West that Ivy helped make]: the mental health part and a part where the director cut the camera off because he didn't like what he was seeing. Kanye didn't like that. And I won't go into it, but an incident happened, and I told him he needed to apologize for it. And it just went left. He got upset, then was like, "Y'all need to recognize I'm the king!" I was like, "Bro, we're kings, too." Like, you're not gonna tell me I'm less than.

■ **I was the halftime performer at Madison Square Garden for MLK Day three years in a row.** Just me and the microphone. It's "Defense! Defense!" and all the noises of the game. Then I go out, and it's complete silence. Everybody's sitting, chilling, anticipating. Stepping into a moment like that, you got to know, *OK, I'm about to kill it*. That's not arrogance. You got to have that confidence, because otherwise they're going to be talking over you. It's like walking into a jungle and taming the lions, but it's 30,000 lions.

■ **The second time I met Lionel Richie, we were in New York at Nobu.** This is after I won my first Grammy, and one of the managers there took me and my wife over to talk to him. He's like, "You're in the family now. You know how before you could take years to work on your album? You can't do that no more. Keep your foot on the gas."

■ **You get what you give.** So I give love. It's not perfect. You're going to have challenges. You're going to have jealousy. You're going to have mistakes. But I'd rather lead with love than lead with hate, because I don't want that energy coming back at me.

Illustration by QUICKHONEY

HELP THEM ACE THEIR PHYSICAL THIS SCHOOL YEAR.

We make school and sports physicals easy.

Every MVP career starts with a physical. Whether your kids are dreaming of a scholarship or a championship, take care of their physical today. Walk-ins are available at our urgent care centers or schedule online with one of our primary care providers.

AT THE FOREFRONT
UChicago Medicine

Schedule today at:
UChicagoMedicine.org/Primary-Care
Or call 888-824-0200

Elevated Wellness

At Your Fingertips

You're at the center of everything we do.

At Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois, we've been your one local and trusted partner for nearly 90 years. And through every journey, our one true focus has remained the same: expanding access to the highest quality, affordable health care for our customers and communities. And as we continue to empower whole person health—with compassion and innovation—we look forward to keeping you and your loved ones at the center of everything we do.

Illinois

A Division of Health Care Service Corporation, a Mutual Legal Reserve Company, an Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association